Southern Living®

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Cakes & Pies

70 Top-Rated Recipes

SOUTHERN CLASSICS FOR EVERY OCCASION

ATLANTIC BEACH PIE

BLUEBERRY-LEMON LAYER CAKE

OUR BEST

Desserts for Parties, Cookouts & Celebrations!

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

ADVERTISEMENT

THE
Southern Living®
COLLECTION

NELLIE HOWARD OSSI INTERIORS

For The Southern Living Home Collection

SPRING COLLECTION

DILLARDS.COM/SOUTHERNLIVING

exclusively at
Dillard's

SOUTHERN LIVING IS A TRADEMARK OF TI LIFESTYLE GROUP, LLC, A SUBSIDIARY OF MEREDITH OPERATIONS CORPORATION AND IS USED UNDER LICENSE.

CONTENTS

28

4 **SL COOKING SCHOOL**
Tips and tricks from the South's most trusted kitchen

8 **THE ICING ON THE CAKE**
Turn a boxed cake mix into a dessert fit for celebrating

18 **MY BIG MAMA'S EGG PIE**
A sentimental and humble recipe takes center stage

22 **GARDEN PARTY**
Edible flowers turn simple cakes into showstoppers—no decorating skills required!

30 **LAYERS OF LOVE**
These three cakes come with memorable stories and sweet reminders of home

40 **ONE-BOWL WONDERS**
Single-layer desserts are easy to whip up whenever you're in the mood for a little something sweet

48 **HAPPY LITTLE EASTER**
Upstage the candy in your basket with these treats

54 **JUST ADD FIZZ**
Southern bakers know that soft drinks have long been the key to some of our most beloved cake recipes

64 **TRUE BLUE**
Blueberries are full of sweet memories

72 **RAISING THE BAR**
Seven bars and brownies that are fun to share

82 **CHILL OUT**
These cool and creamy icebox pies are everything you want in a dessert on a warm day

88 **NEVER BETTER**
Our Test Kitchen whipped up new takes on classic Southern recipes

96 **RECIPE INDEX**

90

ON THE COVER **CLASSIC FAVORITES ATLANTIC BEACH PIE** (PAGE 94) **AND BLUEBERRY-LEMON LAYER CAKE** (PAGE 70)
COVER PHOTOGRAPHY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING **EMILY NABORS HALL**
PROP STYLING **JULIA BAYLESS**

ADVERTISEMENT

Better Homes & Gardens
Better Homes & Gardens NEW COOK BOOK
GOLDSTEIN baking BOOT CAMP
SCAN TO SHOP
Only at Walmart

Southern Living

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Cakes & Pies

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Sid Evans
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Jessica S. Thuston
DESIGN DIRECTOR
Tempy Segrest
PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTOR
Paden Reich
ART DIRECTOR
Emily Johnson
OPERATIONS EDITOR
Diane Rose Keener
CONTRIBUTING ART DIRECTOR
Jennie McClain Shannon
CONTRIBUTING COPY EDITOR
Susan Emack Alison
CONTRIBUTING PROOFREADER
Donna Baldone
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Alexandria Stratton

VICE PRESIDENT & GROUP PUBLISHER
Deirdre Finnegan
deirdre.finnegan@dotdashmdp.com

PREMIUM PUBLISHING EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATION
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Jill Waage
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR
Jennifer Speer Ramundt
ASSISTANT EDITORIAL BUSINESS MANAGER
Gabrielle Renslow
VICE PRESIDENT, CONTENT STUDIOS
Allison Lowery
DIRECTOR, TEST KITCHEN
Lynn Blanchard

PREMIUM PUBLISHING
VICE PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER
Jeremy Biloon
VICE PRESIDENT, GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Stephen Orr
DIRECTOR, EDITORIAL OPERATIONS & FINANCE
Greg Kayko
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIPS
Megan Pearlman
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIPS
Nina Reed
SENIOR DIRECTOR, BRAND MARKETING
Jean Kennedy
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, BRAND MARKETING
Katherine Barnet
BUSINESS DIRECTOR
Jenna Bates
SENIOR BUSINESS MANAGER
Lisa Carlson
SENIOR DIRECTOR, PRINT PREMEDIA SERVICES
Dale Tunender
SENIOR DIRECTOR, QUALITY
Joseph Kohler
PREMEDIA TRAFFICKING SUPERVISOR
Sophia Mozena
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PREMEDIA IMAGING
Michael Sturtz
COLOR QUALITY ANALYST
John Santucci

DOTDASH MEREDITH
PRESIDENT, LIFESTYLE
Alysia Borsa

mpa
The Association of Magazine Media

Dotdash meredith

Please Recycle This Magazine

Copyright © 2023 Meredith Operations Corporation. All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.
SOUTHERN LIVING is a trademark of TI Lifestyle Group, LLC, a subsidiary of Meredith Operations Corporation, registered in the U.S. and other countries.
For syndication or international licensing requests, email syndication.generic@dotdashmdp.com.
For reprint and reuse permission, email mmc.permissions@dotdashmdp.com.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

COOKING SCHOOL

TIPS AND TRICKS FROM THE SOUTH'S MOST TRUSTED KITCHEN

TEST KITCHEN TIP

Conquer Your Fear of PHYLLO DOUGH

Delicate, tissue-thin phyllo is a great way to add crunch to sweet recipes, but it can tear and dry out easily. Next time, remember these three handy tips for working confidently with this notoriously finicky ingredient

Pecan Crunch Tart

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR

SERVES 8

10 (14- x 9-inch) frozen phyllo pastry sheets (from 1 [1-lb.] pkg.), thawed (such as Athens)
½ cup unsalted butter, divided
½ cup light corn syrup
⅓ cup packed dark brown sugar
¼ cup heavy cream
1 tsp. vanilla extract
⅛ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. salt
2 cups chopped toasted pecans
Whipped cream

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Place phyllo on a work surface; cover with plastic wrap and a damp towel to prevent from drying out. Lightly coat a 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom with cooking spray. Microwave ¼ cup of the butter in a small microwavable bowl on HIGH until butter melts, about 20 seconds. Brush 1 phyllo sheet lightly but completely with melted butter, and place, buttered side up, in prepared tart pan, pressing pastry into edges of pan. Brush another phyllo sheet with butter in the same way, and press pastry into pan, buttered side up, at a 45° angle to the first sheet. Repeat procedure with remaining 8 phyllo sheets, covering the bottom and sides of pan with a uniformly thick layer of phyllo. Trim overhanging pastry, leaving ½ inch of phyllo over the edges of the pan. Fold overhanging phyllo to inside, and press to adhere.

2. Microwave remaining ¼ cup butter in a small microwavable bowl on HIGH until butter melts, about 20 seconds. Combine melted butter, light corn syrup, dark brown sugar, heavy cream, vanilla extract, baking soda, and salt in a bowl, stirring well. Stir in chopped toasted pecans. Pour mixture evenly into prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven until browned and bubbly, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack 15 minutes. Remove from pan, and place on a serving plate. Serve tart warm or at room temperature with whipped cream.

1

PLAN AHEAD
Defrost unopened packages of phyllo dough overnight in the refrigerator. Chilled dough is easier to work with than room-temp dough.

2

GO QUICKLY
Phyllo dries out fast, so work as quickly as possible. Keep the dough covered with plastic wrap and a damp (not wet) towel during assembly.

3

USE A LIGHT HAND
Brush or spray the layers of dough lightly with oil or melted butter. This will help create crisper layers with better texture and separation.

ALISON MIKSCH; EGG: ANTONIS ACHELLIOS; ILLUSTRATIONS: KENDYLL HILLEGAS

PANTRY PRIMER

The Skinny on Butter

Get to know this baking essential, from basic to mind-blowingly good

unsalted
BUTTER
sweet cream

UNSALTED BUTTER

Often called "sweet butter," it has no added sodium, which gives cooks and bakers more control over the amount of salt in recipes. However, if the label says "sweet cream butter," check the ingredients because it may contain additional salt.

BEST FOR: Baked goods, pan sauces, and pastas

salted
BUTTER
sweet cream

SALTED BUTTER

No surprise here—these sticks contain extra sodium. Serve this butter with a bread basket or alongside (or on top of) a dish. The added salt also extends its shelf life a bit longer than the unsalted kind.

BEST FOR: Spreading on pancakes, waffles, and baked potatoes

Dairy Free
PLANT BUTTER
SEA SALT

PLANT BUTTER

Made with plant oils such as avocado, canola, coconut, or olive, this soft nondairy spread has the richness and flavor of butter but works for lactose-free and vegan diets. Most brands can be used in recipes just like the real deal.

BEST FOR: Vegan and dairy-free cooking and baking

CULTURED BUTTER
82% BUTTERFAT

CULTURED BUTTER

Live bacterial cultures (like in yogurt) are added to pasteurized cream and allowed to ferment before the mixture is churned into butter. The result is extra creamy with a pleasant tang.

BEST FOR: Recipes in which butter is a prominent flavor, like biscuits or pound cake

MILK FROM IRISH GRASS-FED COWS
PURE IRISH BUTTER

IRISH BUTTER

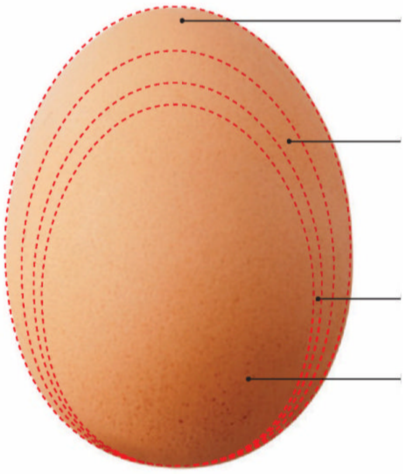
Genuine Irish butter is deep yellow (because the milk comes from grass-fed cows) with a spreadable texture and rich flavor. Like other European butters, it is higher in fat—around 82% compared to regular American butter, which has around 80%.

BEST FOR: Bread baskets, especially when company's coming

EGGS 101

Crack the Size Code

Bigger isn't always better



JUMBO
Great for oversize omelets and egg salad

EXTRA LARGE
Can be used in place of large eggs in small amounts (1 or 2 eggs)

LARGE
Best for baking

MEDIUM
Perfect choice for deviled eggs

DIY

Sugared Blooms

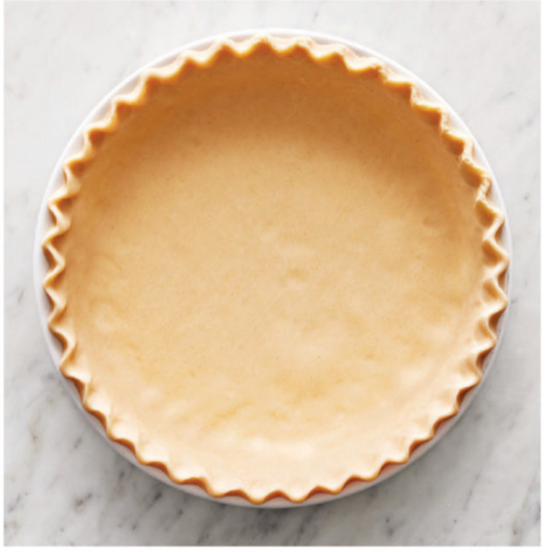
Sparkly edible-flower dessert toppers are simple to make.

[A] With a small brush, coat individual petals with a mixture of egg white powder and water. **[B]** Sprinkle flowers with extra-fine sugar. **[C]** Let dry overnight. See page 29 for more edible-flower ideas.

KNOW-HOW

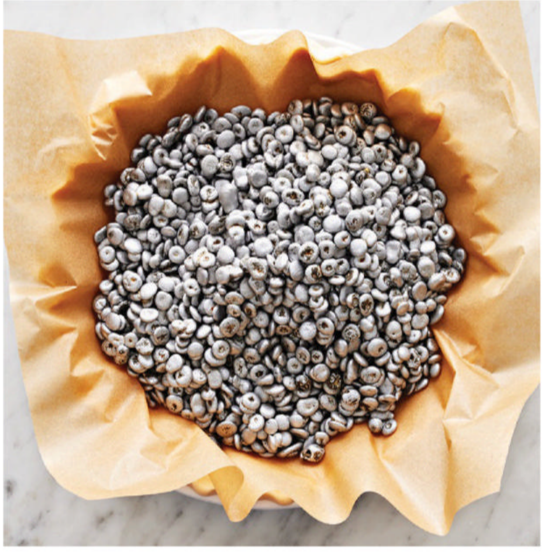
How To Blind-Bake a Piecrust

Fall back on this classic technique to guarantee a gorgeous, flaky crust



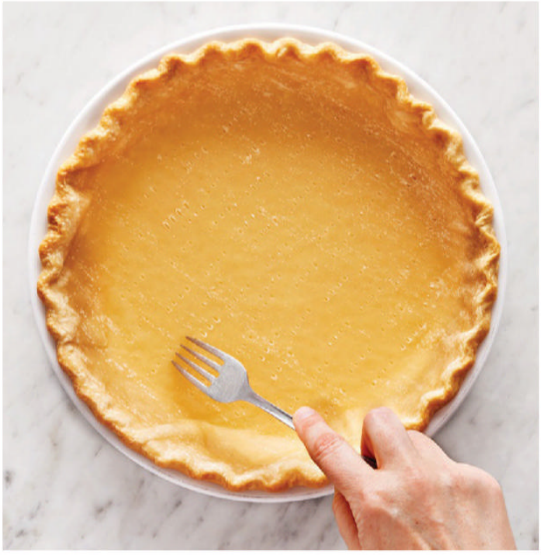
STEP 1

Press dough into the bottom and up the sides of a pie plate. Trim the edges, and crimp as desired. Place the pieplate in the freezer for 30 minutes.



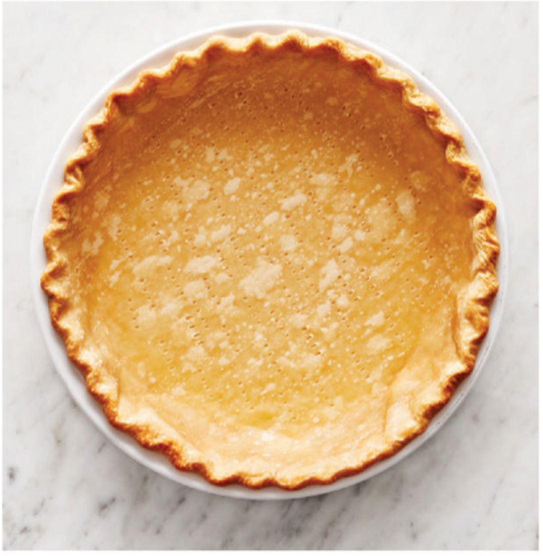
STEP 2

Remove the pie plate from the freezer; preheat oven to 400°F. Line dough with parchment paper. Fill with pie weights or dried beans to cover the bottom and most of the sides. Bake for 10 minutes.



STEP 3

Remove the parchment and weights, and pierce the bottom and sides of the crust with a fork 12 to 15 times. Return to oven, and bake 8 minutes.



STEP 4

Let the crust cool before filling and baking as directed. Cover the edges of the crust with aluminum foil during baking to prevent burning, if needed.

> “When baking a layer cake, wrap the cooled layers in plastic wrap, and refrigerate four to six hours before frosting. This will prevent crumbs from getting into the frosting.”
>
> —**Pam Lolley,** Test Kitchen Professional

Slice Right

When it’s time to cut, press the blade of the knife down firmly and then drag it back in a single motion. Moving the blade back and forth (like a saw) creates jagged edges.

GREG DUPREE

KNOW-HOW

Perfect Squares? Yes, Please

Test Kitchen tricks for even cuts every time

1

LINE THE PAN

Before baking, cover the pan with Reynolds Wrap Aluminum Foil. Leave about a 3-inch overhang on two sides to use as handles to lift the bars once baked.

2

COOL COMPLETELY

It's tempting to cut the bars as soon as they come out of the oven, but the longer they cool, the neater your slices will be. Speed it up by refrigerating for two hours.

3

USE A RULER

For the most precise results, measure bars with a ruler and use a toothpick to make small marks where you'll slice. This is helpful if you need an exact number.

4

SPRAY THE BLADE

A chef's knife is best for slicing bar cookies. Coat the blade with cooking spray, and wipe it with a paper towel. Repeat the process between slices if it's gooey.

SOUTHERN CLASSIC

The Scoop on Whipped Cream

Follow these tips for results so dreamy you'll want to eat it straight from the bowl

KNOW YOUR DAIRY: Fat is the difference between heavy whipping cream (also called heavy cream) and whipping cream (aka light whipping cream). The first has at least 36% milk fat; the latter has 30% to 36%. More fat means stiffer peaks.

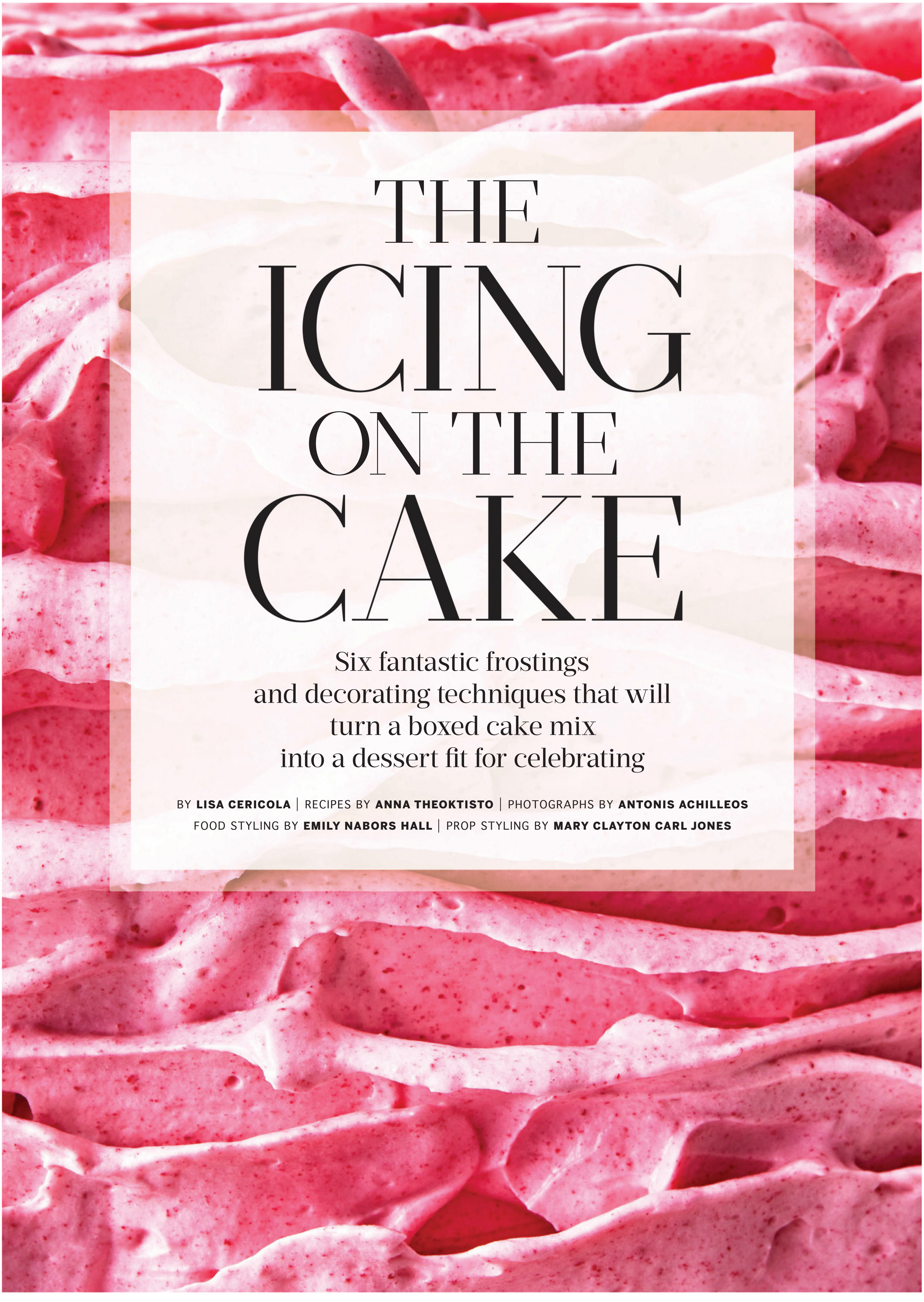
KEEP IT COLD: Whipped cream is best when made with cold dairy and a chilled metal bowl and whisk. Or skip prechilling and use a food processor. It makes dense whipped cream quickly—but be sure to keep an eye on it or you'll have butter.

MAKE IT LAST: Whip up everything a few hours in advance, and thank yourself later. Powdered sugar contains cornstarch, which helps stabilize the cream. Beat in a tablespoon for each cup of cream; chill until serving.

Best-Ever Whipped Cream

ACTIVE 5 MIN.
TOTAL 5 MIN.
MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

Beat 2 cups **heavy whipping cream,** 1 tsp. **vanilla bean paste,** and ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. **powdered sugar** with a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on medium speed until frothy, 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high; continue beating until stiff peaks form, about 1 to 2 more minutes. Use immediately, or chill in an airtight container (up to 4 hours).



THE ICING ON THE CAKE

Six fantastic frostings
and decorating techniques that will
turn a boxed cake mix
into a dessert fit for celebrating

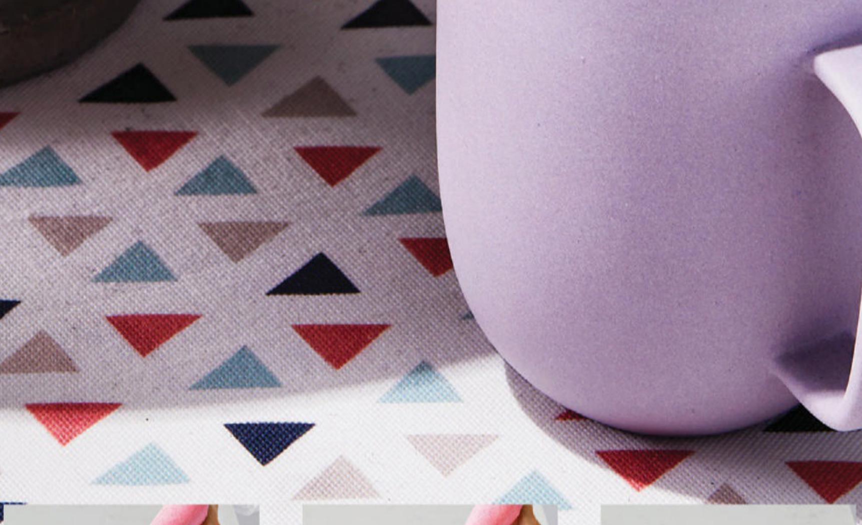
BY **LISA CERICOLA** | RECIPES BY **ANNA THEOKTISTO** | PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **EMILY NABORS HALL** | PROP STYLING BY **MARY CLAYTON CARL JONES**

WHITE CAKE WITH BERRY-SWISS MERINGUE BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

Recipe, page 16

How To Frost a Rose Cake

1. Frost the layers, sides, and top of the cake as directed, using about 3¾ cups of frosting. Place remaining frosting (about 3¾ cups) into a piping bag fitted with a Wilton 127D petal tip (or into a large ziplock bag with 1 corner snipped off). Hold the bag so the tip is straight up and down with the pointed end facing up. Starting at the center of the top of the cake, pipe a small cone-like shape.



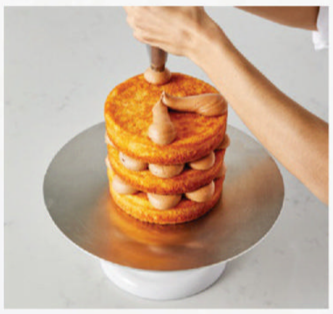
2. Pipe small arching lines around the center cone. Lengthen the arching lines as you work your way toward the top edge of the cake.

3. To frost the rest of the cake, make 2-inch arches with the pointed end of the tip facing up, working your way around the sides of the cake from the top to the bottom to finish the "rose."

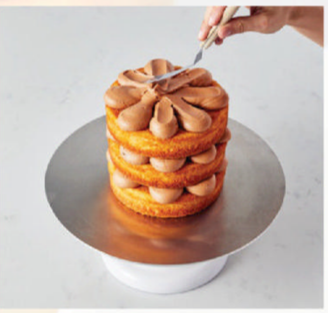
YELLOW CAKE WITH MALTED CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

Recipe, page 17

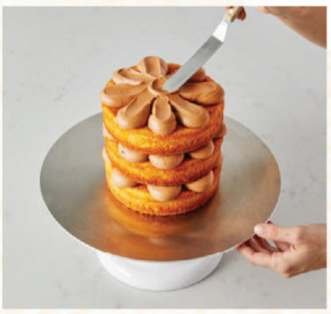
How To Make Perfect Petals



1. Starting along outer edge of cake layer, pipe a 1-inch circular dollop of frosting onto cake. Drag piping bag in toward center of cake while squeezing to create a 1½-inch teardrop shape out of frosting.

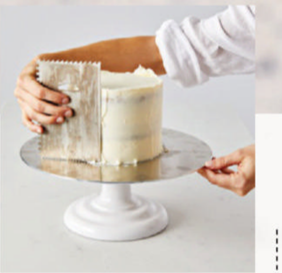


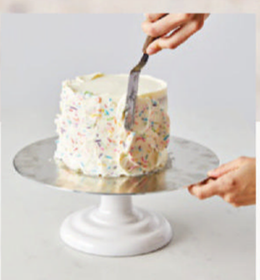
2. Repeat, making 7 more petals around edge. Drag an offset spatula through the center of each teardrop toward the center of the cake, creating a petal-like appearance.

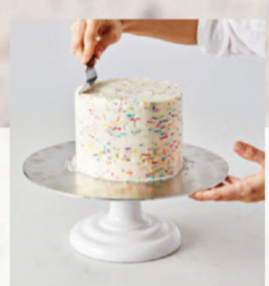


3. Using spatula, smooth the frosting in middle of top cake layer (where petals meet in the center), spreading into a circle to create the center of the flower.

How To Frost a Smooth-Sided Cake







1. Put a cake plate on a stand. Place 1 cake layer on plate, and spread plain frosting on top. Repeat with 2 other cake layers. Use a bench scraper or large offset spatula to spread a thin layer of plain frosting (about ½ cup) on sides of cake, rotating the stand as you work. Chill 30 minutes.

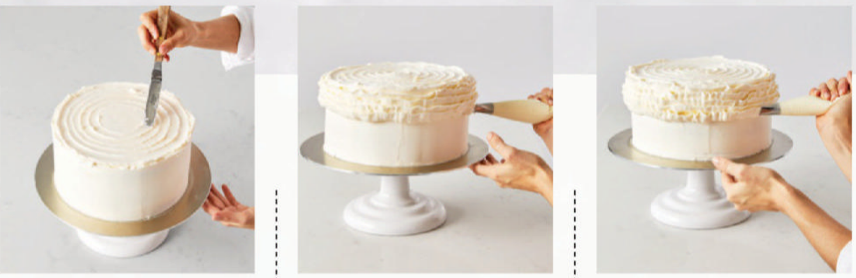
2. Using an offset spatula, spread a thick layer (1 cup) of reserved sprinkle frosting on the sides, rotating the cake as you work to make the sides as smooth as possible. Wipe off excess frosting from the spatula as you go. Fix cracks by spreading a little more sprinkle frosting. Smooth the sides with the spatula, if needed.

3. To make the top edge of the cake look smooth and straight, spread excess icing toward the center. Then smooth the top with the spatula.

CONFETTI CAKE WITH VANILLA-SOUR CREAM FROSTING

Recipe, page 15

How To Frost a Ruffle Cake



1. Using an offset spatula, spread a thin, smooth layer of frosting over the entire cake. Starting with the outer edge of the top layer, press spatula down while spinning cake, making a spiral. Remove cake plate with cake, and chill until frosting is firm and set, about 30 minutes. **2.** Place remaining frosting in a piping bag fitted with a Wilton 104 petal tip. Hold the bag with the pointed end of the tip facing up. Starting at the top of 1 side of the cake, turn cake while piping a ring, gently moving the piping bag up and down slightly to create a ruffled effect. **3.** Repeat process a bit lower on cake, overlapping each previous ring slightly until you reach the bottom of the cake.

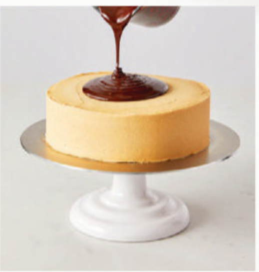
RED VELVET CAKE WITH WHITE CHOCOLATE-CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Recipe, page 17

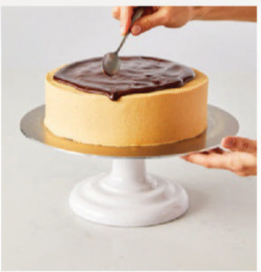
DEVIL'S FOOD CAKE WITH SALTED PEANUT BUTTER FROSTING AND GANACHE

Recipe, page 16

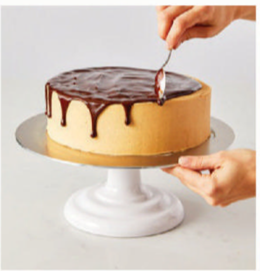
How To Create an Icing Drip



1. Make sure the drip icing is cool but not cold. Slowly pour about half of it over the top of the cake.



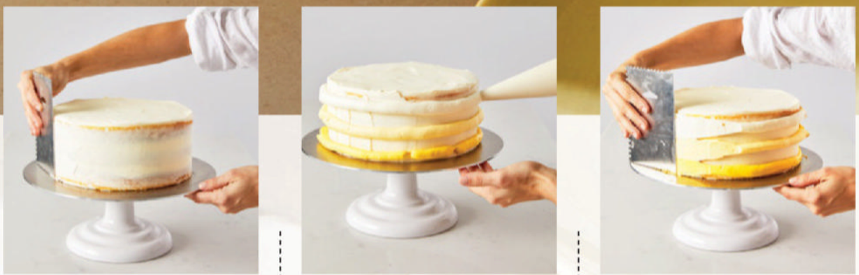
2. Spoon more icing around top edge of cake so that it drips down. Spoon remaining icing onto center of cake.



3. If needed, use the spoon to nudge the icing down the sides of the cake. Use an offset spatula to smooth the top.

LEMON CAKE WITH LEMON-THYME FROSTING

How To Make Smooth Ombré Stripes



1. Spread 1 cup undyed frosting in a smooth layer over the top of 1 cake layer. Repeat with remaining 2 cake layers and 2 cups of the undyed frosting. Using a bench scraper or large offset spatula, spread a thin layer of undyed frosting over sides of cake. Chill 30 minutes.

2. Starting at the base of cake, pipe the darker frosting in a ring all the way around cake. Leaving space above the dark line, pipe a ring of the lighter frosting all the way around the cake. Repeat again with the undyed frosting. (Alternatively, leave less space between the rings to make more stripes.)

3. Using a bench scraper or large offset spatula, drag the flat edge around the sides of the cake to smooth and press the rings together, creating an ombré effect.

Confetti Cake with Vanilla-Sour Cream Frosting

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 20 MIN.,
PLUS 55 MIN. COOLING

SERVES 12

Dress up your favorite confetti cake mix with an icing that's pleasantly tangy, thanks to the addition of sour cream. Salted butter also makes a difference here and balances out the sweetness of the cake.

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. confetti cake mix (plus ingredients listed on box for preparing cake)
Baking spray with flour
1½ cups butter, softened
4½ cups unsifted powdered sugar
½ cup sour cream
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ cup rainbow candy sprinkles, plus more for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare confetti cake mix according to package directions. Divide batter evenly among 3 (6-inch) round cake pans coated with baking spray.

2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cakes comes out clean, 20 to 23 minutes. Cool in pans. Invert cakes onto wire racks; cool completely.

3. Beat softened butter in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. With mixer on low speed, gradually add powdered sugar, sour cream, and vanilla extract. Beat until fluffy, stopping occasionally to scrape down sides of bowl, about 3 minutes. (You will have about 5 cups frosting.) Set aside about 1 cup of frosting in a separate bowl, and fold in rainbow candy sprinkles.

4. Place a cake plate on a stand or a lazy Susan. Put 1 cake layer on plate; spread 1 cup plain frosting over top, smoothing top using a bench scraper or an offset spatula. Repeat with remaining 2 cake layers and 2 cups of the frosting. Using a large offset spatula, spread a thin layer of frosting (about ½ cup) over sides of cake. Chill until frosting has firmed and set, about 30 minutes.

5. Spread a thicker layer of reserved sprinkle frosting (about 1 cup) on sides of cake, smoothing as you go. Spoon any remaining frosting into a piping bag fitted with a medium round tip. Pipe dollops around top edge of cake. Garnish with additional sprinkles.

Lemon Cake with Lemon-Thyme Frosting

ACTIVE 45 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 45 MIN.,
PLUS 55 MIN. COOLING

SERVES 12

A frosting that's infused with fresh herbs sounds fancy, but it's just as easy as making a cup of tea. Heat up the heavy cream, and then let the thyme sprigs steep. Fresh rosemary would also pair nicely with this lemony cake.

2 (15¼-oz.) pkg. lemon cake mix (plus ingredients listed on box for preparing cake)
Baking spray with flour
⅓ cup heavy whipping cream
¼ oz. thyme sprigs (about 1 handful)
2 cups (1 lb.) unsalted butter
1 (2-lb.) pkg. powdered sugar
¼ cup fresh lemon juice (from 1 large lemon)
Yellow food coloring gel
White sugar pearl sprinkles

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare lemon cake mix according to package directions. Divide batter evenly among 3 (9-inch) round cake pans coated with baking spray.

2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cakes comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire racks; cool completely, about 45 minutes.

3. Heat cream in a small saucepan over medium until just simmering. Add thyme sprigs, pressing down using a spoon to submerge. Remove from heat; cover and let stand until cream has cooled, about 1 hour. Remove and discard sprigs. Set aside cream.

4. Beat butter in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. With mixer on low speed, gradually add powdered sugar, lemon juice, and infused cream. Increase speed to medium-high, and beat until fluffy, about 3 minutes. (You will have about 7 cups frosting.)

5. Measure 1¼ cups frosting into each of 2 small bowls. (Reserve remaining undyed frosting in mixer bowl.) Add 4 drops food coloring to 1 small bowl of frosting, and stir to combine. Add 2 drops food coloring to remaining small bowl of frosting; stir to combine. Spoon ⅔ cup each of dark yellow frosting, light yellow frosting, and undyed frosting into 3 separate piping bags. Snip a 1-inch tip off each bag. Spoon remaining dark and light yellow frostings (about ½ cup each) and ½ cup undyed frosting into 3 separate piping bags fitted with different star tips (such as Wilton 21, 32, and 2D). Set aside all piping bags.

6. Place a cake plate on a lazy Susan or stand. Put 1 cake layer on plate; spread 1 cup undyed frosting in a smooth layer over the top. Repeat with remaining 2 cake layers and 2 cups of the undyed frosting. Using a bench scraper or a large offset spatula, spread remaining undyed frosting (about ⅓ cup) in a thin layer over sides of cake. Remove cake plate with cake from lazy Susan. Chill until frosting sets and firms up, about 30 minutes.

7. Return cake plate with cake to lazy Susan. Using the dark yellow frosting in the piping bag with the snipped tip, start at the base of the cake, and turn cake while piping a straight line, creating a ring of frosting around the cake. Leaving space above the dark yellow line, repeat the piping process using light yellow frosting. Repeat with undyed frosting. (Alternatively, leave less space between the rings and repeat series of dark yellow, light yellow, and undyed lines to make more stripes.) Turn cake while dragging the straight edge of a bench scraper (or a large offset spatula) around side of cake (holding scraper at a 30-degree angle toward cake), smoothing and pressing the frosting lines together to create blended stripes of frosting around cake.

8. Using the reserved dark yellow, light yellow, and undyed frosting in piping bags with star tips, pipe small rosettes and flowers on top of cake. Garnish with sugar pearl sprinkles.

Devil's Food Cake with Salted Peanut Butter Frosting and Ganache

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 20 MIN., PLUS 55 MIN. COOLING

SERVES 12

Our Test Kitchen called this salty-sweet peanut butter frosting "out of this world." Not only is it lick-the-spatula delicious, but it also spreads easily and smoothly, which makes decorating a breeze. Top it off with drips of chocolate ganache. If you're in a pinch, you can substitute jarred hot fudge, but we think the homemade version is worth a few extra minutes.

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. devil's food cake mix (plus ingredients listed on box for preparing cake)
Baking spray with flour
1 cup butter, softened
1 cup creamy peanut butter
3 cups unsifted powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¾ cup heavy whipping cream, divided
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
Chopped roasted salted peanuts

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare devil's food cake mix according to package directions. Divide batter evenly between 2 (9-inch) round cake pans coated with baking spray.

2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cakes comes out clean, about 22 minutes. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire racks; cool completely, about 45 minutes.

3. Beat softened butter and peanut butter with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Reduce mixer speed to low; gradually add powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and ¼ cup of the cream. Beat on medium-high speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes. (You will have about 4 cups frosting.)

4. Spread 1½ cups frosting in a smooth layer over top of 1 cake layer using a large offset spatula. Top with remaining cake layer, and spread 1½ cups frosting in a smooth layer over top, spreading some of the frosting on top layer in a thin layer around sides of whole cake. Chill until frosting has firmed and set, about 30 minutes. Spread remaining frosting (about 1 cup) over sides of whole cake, smoothing as you go.

5. Microwave remaining ½ cup cream in a small microwavable bowl on HIGH until steaming, about 1 minute. Stir in chocolate chips until mixture is smooth. Cool 15 minutes.

6. Slowly pour about half of the chocolate mixture over the top of the cake. Spoon more of the mixture around top edge, allowing it to drip down sides, and then spoon any remaining chocolate mixture onto center of cake. If needed, use the spoon to nudge the icing down the sides of the cake. Smooth the top with an offset spatula, and sprinkle with peanuts.

White Cake with Berry-Swiss Meringue Buttercream Frosting

ACTIVE 1 HOUR, 10 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 25 MIN., PLUS 55 MIN. COOLING

SERVES 12

There's not a drop of food coloring in this pretty pink dessert. The freeze-dried raspberries (available at Target, Whole Foods Market, and other retailers) add a nice rosy hue and a bit of tang to offset the richness of the buttercream. If the frosting separates a little as you are making it, pop it in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Then continue to beat again.

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. white cake mix (plus ingredients listed on box for preparing cake)
Baking spray with flour
1½ cups freeze-dried raspberries (about 1 oz.)
8 large egg whites, at room temperature
½ tsp. cream of tartar
¼ tsp. kosher salt
1¾ cups plus 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
3 cups (1½ lb.) unsalted butter, softened and cut into 1-Tbsp. pats
2 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare white cake mix according to package directions. Divide batter evenly among 3 (8-inch) round cake pans coated with baking spray.

2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cakes comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire racks; cool completely, about 45 minutes.

3. Process raspberries in a food processor until a fine powder forms, about 1 minute. Sift raspberry powder through a fine mesh strainer; discard any unsifted pieces and seeds. Set powder aside.

4. Beat egg whites, cream of tartar, and kosher salt with a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on medium speed until soft peaks form, about 5 minutes, gradually adding ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons of the sugar.

5. Bring ½ cup water and remaining 1½ cups sugar to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high. Cook, undisturbed, until mixture reaches 230°F to 240°F (soft-ball stage), about 5 minutes. With mixer on medium speed, gradually add hot sugar mixture to egg white mixture. Increase speed to medium-high, and continue beating until meringue is room temperature, about 10 minutes. Remove whisk attachment from mixer; fit mixer with a paddle attachment. With mixer on medium speed, gradually add softened butter to meringue, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until butter is combined and mixture is smooth. (If mixture begins to look broken, continue beating until it comes back together.) Beat in vanilla and raspberry powder until combined. Increase mixer speed to high; beat until just fluffy, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape down sides if needed. (You will have about 7½ cups frosting.)

6. Place a cake plate on a lazy Susan or stand. Put 1 cake layer on plate, and spread top with 1 cup frosting. Repeat with remaining 2 cake layers and 2 cups of frosting. Using a large offset spatula, spread a thin layer of frosting (about ¾ cup) over sides and top of entire cake. Spoon remaining frosting (about 3¾ cups) into a piping bag fitted with a Wilton 127D petal tip. Hold piping bag so pointed (thin) tip is angled upward. Pipe a small cone-like shape in center of top of cake to create a rosebud. Pipe small arching lines around cone, slightly lifting and dropping your wrist as you pipe and lengthening arches as you work toward outside edges, to create petals. Starting at top of cake, pipe 2-inch arches around sides of cake, working toward the bottom and overlapping arches slightly, to create petals around cake.

Yellow Cake with Malted Chocolate Buttercream

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 50 MIN.,
PLUS 55 MIN. COOLING

SERVES 12

One of the most nostalgic combinations is yellow cake with chocolate frosting. This version, which has a touch of malted milk powder in the buttercream, is sure to bring back happy memories—perhaps of birthday parties. It makes enough to cover the cake completely. If you frost it using the flower design and leave the sides bare, you will have leftover buttercream, which can be stored in the freezer for your next baking project.

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. yellow cake mix (plus ingredients listed on box for preparing cake)
Baking spray with flour
1½ cups semisweet chocolate chips
1½ cups butter, softened
3 cups unsifted powdered sugar
⅓ cup malted milk powder
¼ cup heavy whipping cream
1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare yellow cake mix according to package directions. Divide batter evenly among 3 (6-inch) round cake pans coated with baking spray.

2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cakes comes out clean, 20 to 23 minutes. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire racks; cool completely, about 45 minutes.

3. Microwave semisweet chocolate chips in a microwavable bowl on HIGH until melted, about 90 seconds, stopping to stir every 30 seconds. Let cool 10 minutes.

4. Beat butter in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. With mixer on low speed, gradually add powdered sugar, malted milk powder, and cream, beating until just combined. Add melted chocolate and vanilla extract; beat on medium-high speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes. (You will have about 5 cups frosting.)

5. Spoon frosting into a large piping bag, and snip a ½-inch tip off bag. Create frosting flower petals on top side of 1 cake layer: Starting along outer edge of top of cake layer, pipe a 1-inch circular dollop of frosting onto cake; drag piping bag in toward center of cake while squeezing to create a 1½-inch teardrop shape. Repeat process 7 more times, working around top edge of cake. Drag a small offset spatula lengthwise through center of each frosting teardrop from outer circle toward center of cake, creating a petal-like appearance. (Dip spatula in warm water and wipe dry before dragging through each frosting teardrop.) Repeat process using remaining 2 cake layers. Carefully stack frosted layers on top of each other.

6. Using offset spatula, smooth the frosting in middle of top cake layer (where petals meet in the center), spreading into a circle to create the center of the flower design.

Red Velvet Cake with White Chocolate-Cream Cheese Frosting

ACTIVE 50 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 45 MIN.,
PLUS 55 MIN. COOLING

SERVES 12

This classic Southern cake calls for a rich cream cheese frosting, and our recipe delivers with extra sweetness from white chocolate. Even if you skip the ruffled design, our Test Kitchen says this dessert will steal the show. Keep the frosting cool because it can soften and melt.

2 (15¼-oz.) pkg. red velvet cake mix (plus ingredients listed on box for preparing cake)
Baking spray with flour
2 cups unsalted butter, softened
2 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
10 cups unsifted powdered sugar
10 oz. white chocolate, melted and cooled slightly
2 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare red velvet cake mix according to package directions. Divide batter evenly among 3 (9-inch) round cake pans coated with baking spray.

2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cakes comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire racks; cool completely, about 45 minutes.

3. Beat softened butter and cream cheese with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. With mixer on low speed, gradually add powdered sugar, white chocolate, and vanilla. Increase speed to medium-high; beat until fluffy, about 2 minutes. (You will have about 10 cups frosting.)

4. Place a cake plate on a lazy Susan or stand. Put 1 cake layer on plate; spread top with 1¼ cups frosting. Repeat with remaining 2 cake layers and 2½ cups of the frosting. Using a large offset spatula, spread a thin layer of frosting (about 1 cup) over sides of entire cake. Using an offset spatula or the back of a teaspoon, gently press into outer edge of frosting on top cake layer. Spin cake to create a spiral pattern in frosting, moving to center of cake. Remove cake plate with cake from lazy Susan, and chill cake until frosting is firm and set, about 30 minutes.

5. Place remaining frosting (about 5¼ cups) in a piping bag fitted with a Wilton 104 petal tip.

6. Return cake plate with cake to lazy Susan. Hold piping bag with pointed (thin) end of the tip facing straight up. Starting at the top of 1 side of the cake, turn it while piping a ring around it, gently moving the piping bag up and down slightly to create a ruffled effect. Pipe another ruffled ring a bit lower on cake, overlapping first ring slightly. Repeat process around cake, making each ring a little lower and overlapping slightly, until you reach the bottom.

MY BIG MAMA'S EGG PIE

Forget sky-high desserts. For Jocelyn Delk Adams, author of the cookbook and blog *Grandbaby Cakes,* a much more sentimental and humble recipe takes center stage

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **EMILY NABORS HALL**
PROP STYLING BY **LYDIA DEGARIS PURSELL**

SWEET MEMORIES
Jocelyn Delk Adams (at right) with her beloved Big Mama

My Big Mama's favorite dessert was egg pie. I didn't remember this until after my grandmother died, when I rewatched a video that I'd made with her about two years earlier. During our informal interview, I asked her several questions about her childhood, the immense challenges of growing up and raising a family in the Jim Crow South, and (of course) how she learned to bake. We sat comfortably in her natural element, the kitchen, and chatted while I documented her history and she baked biscuits from instinct. Hunched over the stove smiling, she brushed them with butter as the scent of bread swallowed the room whole.

To know Big Mama was to adore her. Every time I hugged her, I simultaneously breathed in a whiff of her perfume and a baked good, whatever tickled her fancy to create at the time. Her skin was golden bronze melanin, and her spirit glowed even brighter. She seemed quite fragile when we had this conversation, but even at the age of 90, her memory was pristine.

When I asked her about her favorite thing to bake, the answer surprised me, and her eyes lit up as she talked about it. "I just love egg pie. There's nothing like it," she said. The truth was, I'd never had it before. What was egg pie? As she talked about it, I realized how unassuming it is: simple, classic, uncomplicated. It doesn't have the grandeur of a towering coconut or caramel cake, but the magic is in its humbleness.

My Big Mama, born Maggie Mae Thomas, grew up during the late 1920s and 1930s in Mississippi, and her father had a farm that her siblings worked on. Being one of the youngest children, she didn't help in the field. Instead, she prepared the meals. She cooked supper for everyone, always making sure something sweet also graced the table. Fresh eggs, milk, and butter were plentiful due to their glorious supply of chickens and cows, so egg pie, with its at-hand ingredients, became a mainstay. When supper was ready, she would ring the bell for her daddy, brothers, and sisters to run in and eat. I imagine how special a treat like egg pie must have been after they had labored intensely in the fields all day. Its custardy, smooth filling and flaky crust made it irresistible.

Many years later, when I started baking with my Big Mama on visits to Winona, Mississippi, we focused more on making things like sour cream pound cake and homemade vanilla ice cream. On Thanksgiving, sweet potato and pecan pies stole the show, and at Christmas, we had Big Mama's tea cakes and my mom's 7Up cake. Egg pie unfortunately got lost in the shuffle.

But Big Mama never forgot its significance. She passed away just after Christmas five years ago, and I realized then that her favorite dessert needed a prominent place in my recipe arsenal too. Now, we make it every Christmas. The ingredients come together quickly and effectively, and small hints of vanilla and ground nutmeg give it more depth and personality. Egg pie has become my Big Mama's legacy, with each slice representing a small piece of who she was, and I will continue to serve it to honor her for years to come.

Big Mama's Egg Pie

ACTIVE 35 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 45 MIN., PLUS 1 HOUR, 10 MIN. COOLING

SERVES 8

CRUST

- **1¼ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for work surface**
- **1 tsp. granulated sugar**
- **½ tsp. kosher salt**
- **½ cup cold unsalted butter, cubed**
- **¼ cup cold water, plus more if needed**

FILLING

- **1 cup whole milk**
- **¼ cup butter**
- **3 large eggs, at room temperature**
- **1 cup granulated sugar**
- **1½ Tbsp. all-purpose flour**
- **1½ tsp. vanilla extract**
- **¼ tsp. ground nutmeg, plus more for garnish**

1. Prepare the Crust: Whisk together flour, sugar, and salt in a bowl to combine. Add butter. Using a pastry cutter, cut butter into flour mixture until various-size crumbs form. Slowly add water, mixing with hands until dough forms, adding more water if needed until dough just comes together. (There may still be some dry flour in bowl.) Shape dough into a ball. Wrap tightly with plastic wrap; chill until cold, 45 to 55 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, prepare the Filling: Cook milk and butter in a saucepan over medium-low, undisturbed, 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Cool to room temperature, 45 minutes.

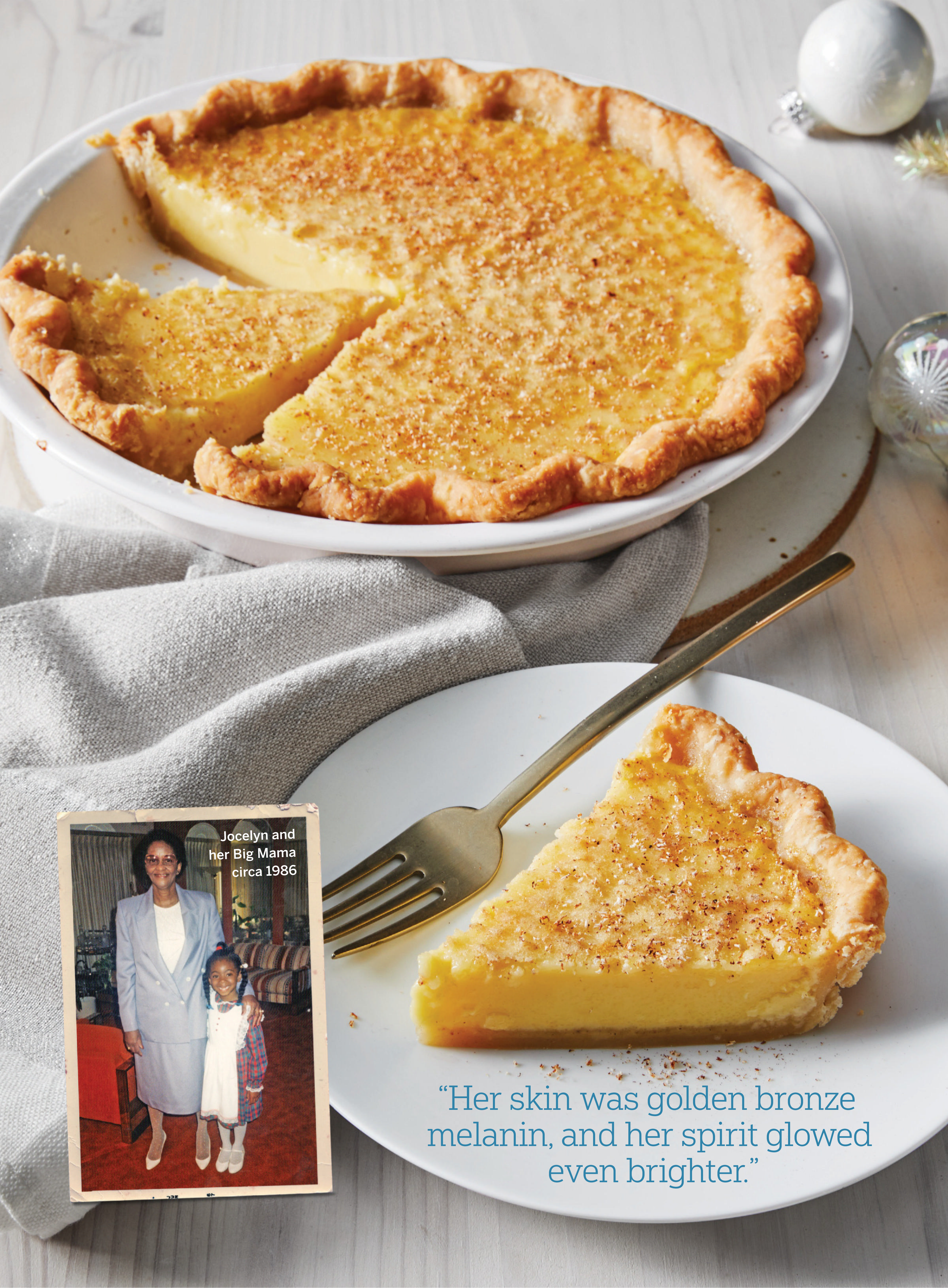
3. Whisk together eggs, sugar, flour, vanilla, and nutmeg in a medium bowl. Whisk in cooled milk mixture. Set aside.

4. Preheat oven to 425°F. Unwrap chilled dough; place on a lightly floured work surface. Using a rolling pin, roll dough out to ¼-inch thickness. Transfer to an ungreased freezer-safe 9-inch pie plate. Press dough into bottom and up sides of plate. Crimp edges. Freeze Crust 10 minutes.

5. Remove Crust from freezer. Line with parchment paper; add pie weights. Bake in preheated oven 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F. Remove Crust from oven; remove weights and parchment. Cool 10 minutes.

6. Pour Filling into Crust. Bake at 325°F until top of pie is lightly browned and center jiggles just slightly, 35 to 40 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; cool completely, about 1 hour. Sprinkle with additional nutmeg, and serve.

INSET: COURTESY JOYCE DELK ADAMS; PREVIOUS PAGE: BETH MORGAN



Jocelyn and her Big Mama circa 1986

> “Her skin was golden bronze melanin, and her spirit glowed even brighter.”

GARDEN PARTY

Edible flowers turn simple cakes into showstoppers—no decorating skills required!

* * *

RECIPES BY **MARY CLAIRE BRITTON** | PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **TORIE COX** | PROP STYLING BY **KAY E. CLARKE**

“NAKED” LEMON CAKE WITH A FLOWER CROWN

Recipe, page 28

A round cutter turns a sheet cake into these pretty two-layer minis.

MINI CONFETTI CAKES

Recipe, page 28

VANILLA LAYER CAKE WITH A FLOWER CUFF

Recipe, page 28

For a smooth finish, dip a knife or offset spatula in hot water; then wipe it dry before frosting the cake.

ROSE PETAL CUPCAKES

Recipe, page 28

Pick petals that coordinate with your party's signature colors.

Made with boxed cake and brownie mixes, this Bundt is decadent yet a cinch to make.

CHOCOLATE BUNDT CAKE

Recipe, page 29

Rose Petal Cupcakes

ACTIVE 35 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 15 MIN.

SERVES 24

1 (16¼-oz.) pkg. white cake mix (such as Betty Crocker Super Moist Favorites White Cake Mix)
Rose-Vanilla Buttercream (recipe, opposite page)
24 edible rose petals

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare cake batter according to package directions. Divide batter among 24 muffin cups lined with paper baking cups. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 14 to 19 minutes. Cool cupcakes in pans on a wire rack 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes to racks, and cool completely, about 30 minutes.

2. Prepare Rose-Vanilla Buttercream.

3. Spoon Rose-Vanilla Buttercream into a piping bag fitted with a large star tip; pipe onto cooled cupcakes. Gently press an edible rose petal into the side of each cupcake.

"Naked" Lemon Cake with a Flower Crown

ACTIVE 40 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 50 MIN.

SERVES 16

2 (15¼-oz.) pkg. lemon cake mix (such as Betty Crocker Super Moist Delights Lemon Cake Mix)
Lemon-Vanilla Buttercream (recipe, opposite page)
Edible flowers (such as tuberous begonias, stock, violas, English daisies, and pansies)
Fresh mint leaves

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together all wet ingredients needed to prepare cake batters (per package directions) in 1 large bowl. Stir together all dry ingredients from cake mix packages in a separate bowl. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients; stir together until well blended. Divide combined batter among 3 greased and floured 9-inch round cake pans. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool cake layers in pans on a wire rack 10 minutes. Invert cake layers onto racks, and cool completely, about 45 minutes.

2. Prepare Lemon-Vanilla Buttercream.

3. Using a serrated knife, trim domed tops of cake layers to make them flat and even. Spread Lemon-Vanilla Buttercream between layers and on top and sides of cake, allowing some of the cake to remain visible on the sides. Smooth with an offset spatula. Arrange a ring of edible flowers and mint leaves around top edge of cake to form a "flower crown."

Vanilla Layer Cake with a Flower Cuff

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 50 MIN.

SERVES 10

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. yellow cake mix (such as Duncan Hines Classic Yellow Cake Mix)
Vanilla Buttercream (recipe, opposite page)
Small edible flower petals (such as sweet Williams, roses, and tuberous begonias)
1 large edible flower (such as a peony or rose)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare cake batter according to package directions. Divide batter among 3 greased and floured 6-inch round cake pans. Bake until a wooden pick inserted into center comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Cool cake layers in pans on a wire rack 10 minutes. Invert cake layers onto rack; cool completely, about 45 minutes.

2. Prepare Vanilla Buttercream.

3. Using a serrated knife, trim domed tops of cake layers to make them even. Spread buttercream between layers and on top and sides of cake. Arrange a ring of edible flower petals around base of cake to form a cuff. Place large edible flower on top of cake.

Mini Confetti Cakes

ACTIVE 45 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 10 MIN.

SERVES 15

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. vanilla cake mix (such as Betty Crocker Super Moist Favorites Vanilla Cake Mix)
3 Tbsp. pink candy sprinkles (pink jimmies)
Sweetened Whipped Cream (recipe, opposite page)
Edible flowers (such as violas, tuberous begonias, English daisies, and pansies)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare cake batter according to package directions, stirring pink candy sprinkles into batter. Pour batter into a greased and floured 13- x 9-inch baking pan. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 28 to 33 minutes. Cool cake in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes. Invert cake onto rack; cool completely, about 45 minutes.

2. Prepare the Sweetened Whipped Cream.

3. Cut out 15 mini cakes from cooled cake using a 2½-inch round cutter. Slice each mini cake in half horizontally, making 2 layers per mini cake. Using a small offset spatula, spread Sweetened Whipped Cream on half of layers, and top with remaining layers. Cover tops and sides of cakes with whipped cream. Press edible flowers directly onto cakes.

Chocolate Bundt Cake

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 45 MIN.

SERVES 16

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. chocolate fudge cake mix (such as Betty Crocker Super Moist Favorites Chocolate Fudge Cake Mix)
1 (18-oz.) pkg. double-chocolate brownie mix (such as Ghirardelli Double Chocolate Brownie Mix)
5 oz. milk chocolate, chopped
2½ oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1½ cups unsalted butter, softened
¼ cup powdered sugar
¼ cup Dutch-process cocoa
2 Tbsp. sour cream
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Edible pansy flowers

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together all wet ingredients needed to prepare cake and brownie batters (per package directions) in 1 large bowl. Stir together dry ingredients from cake and brownie mix packages in a separate bowl. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients; stir together until well blended. Pour batter into a greased and floured 12-cup Bundt pan. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 50 to 55 minutes. Cool cake in pan on a wire rack 30 minutes. Invert onto rack, and cool completely, about 1 hour.

2. Place chopped milk chocolate and bittersweet chocolate in a medium-size microwavable bowl. Microwave on HIGH until melted, about 1 minute, stirring after 30 seconds. Cool 5 minutes.

3. Place butter in bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat on medium speed until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low; gradually add powdered sugar and cocoa, beating until smooth, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl as needed. Beat in sour cream and vanilla, and gradually beat in cooled melted chocolate. Increase speed to medium, and beat until smooth, 2 to 3 minutes.

4. Spoon mixture into a piping bag fitted with a ¼-inch round tip; pipe frosting onto the top of the cooled cake in a decorative pattern. Press edible flowers onto frosting to decorate as desired.

Sweetened Whipped Cream

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 15 MIN.

MAKES 6 CUPS

2 cups heavy cream
1 tsp. vanilla extract
6 Tbsp. unsifted powdered sugar

Beat cream and vanilla in a bowl with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until foamy. Gradually add powdered sugar, and beat until stiff peaks form.

Vanilla Buttercream

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 15 MIN.

MAKES ABOUT 6 CUPS

1½ cups unsalted butter, softened
5 cups unsifted powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ cup heavy cream

Beat butter in bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low; gradually add powdered sugar, beating until smooth, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl as needed. Beat in vanilla. Gradually add cream, beating on medium speed until fluffy and spreadable, about 30 seconds.

LEMON-VANILLA BUTTERCREAM

Reduce cream to 2 tablespoons. Beat in 2 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 lemon) with cream.

ROSE-VANILLA BUTTERCREAM

Stir 1 tablespoon rose water into frosting after beating in cream.

EDIBLE FLOWER FACTS

Dress desserts with the safest blooms of the bunch

* * *

Choose flowers labeled as edible, which you can find in the produce section of specialty-food stores. Or order them online at melissas.com.

•

Use caution whenever eating flowers, and ensure petals are clean and free of pesticides, fertilizers, and bugs.

•

Be aware that several plants may go by the same name; always make sure you are consuming one that's safe to eat.

•

Some edible blooms may have a bitter taste and are best used for decoration only.

•

When in doubt, don't eat them!

* * *

SAFE TO EAT (IF CLEAN)

Carnation, English daisy, freesia, lavender, nasturtium, pansy, peony, rose, stock, sweet William, tuberous begonia, violet

LAYERS OF LOVE

Typical of great Southern recipes, these three cakes come with memorable stories and sweet reminders of home

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **VICTOR PROTASIO**
FOOD STYLING BY **TORIE COX** | PROP STYLING BY **CINDY BARR**

GENERAL ELECTRIC

APPLE
STACK CAKE

BY **RONNI LUNDY**

My great-aunt Rae was an operator for Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company in Corbin, Kentucky. When I was a little girl and stayed there in the summer or over Christmas, it was my great delight to make a call on the "magic phone." Not only did the heavy black object have no dial, as ours did in Louisville, but when you picked it up, instead of a strident dial tone, a kindly voice would ask, "Number, please?" to which you were to respond with the three digits that verily defined whatever household you were trying to reach.

More often than not, it was my great-aunt's pleasant voice that would greet me, and when she'd hear mine, she'd respond, "Well—hello, little girl. What are you doing today?" I would tell her the newest adventure I'd gotten into, and before connecting me to one of my other kinfolk in town, she'd sometimes whisper the location of a piece of gum she'd hidden in the house for me or give me a message for one of the grown-ups—making me feel grown-up too. She was, in a way, the communication hub of our family.

To my knowledge, Rae and her sister Johnnie always lived together, even during the too few years that Rae was married to her life's love, my great-uncle Charlie, before his death. Their house on Carter Street was where my mother and Uncle Jack lived in their teens after their parents were killed in a car wreck, and it was where my father was welcomed as friend and kin when he married my mother.

As sisters do, they seemed to work out a division of labor between themselves. Johnnie was the gardener who planted, hoed, and harvested. She wrung the chickens' necks and plucked their feathers before frying them. Rae was there for multihanded tasks such as canning, but because of her day job, she was not as regular in the kitchen. This is why, I think, it was Johnnie's task to pick the gnarly green June apples that grew on their tree, pare them, and lay them out to dry on clean sheets, while Rae was the maker of the family's favorite special-occasion dessert, apple stack cake.

A labor-intensive art that required baking each hand-rolled and patted-out layer one at a time in the same cast-iron skillet before skillfully stacking them high with steaming dried-apple puree between, it was a job for Rae's days off in cold winter. On one such day, my cousin Sparky dropped by for a cup of coffee just in time for Rae to unwrap and cut into the cake she had made three days before. (A stack cake must "ripen.")

As the two took their first bites of what was an especially good cake, Rae did what most Appalachians do when something pleases: She remembered. "Mmm, mmm, I wish Pap Lundy was here," she said. "There's nobody on this earth who likes a good stack cake better than he does." For a moment, she and Sparky considered my daddy, who was living over three hours away in Louisville, where there was work he could not find in his beloved home in Eastern Kentucky. Sparky reached for his hat and said, "Rae, wrap up some of that cake and I'll drive it up to Pap right now. Don't have a thing more important to do."

And that is how, late that afternoon, Daddy and Sparky were marveling over Rae's stack cake and telling stories from home until the laughing made tears run down their cheeks. Then Sparky put his hat on and drove all the way back, while Daddy wrapped up the rest of that cake to share with Mama and me later.

A VERY TALL TALE

According to Appalachian folklore, whenever there was a wedding in the community, women would bake single layers of this regional dessert and then bring them to the reception. There, they would stack the collected layers with a filling made from dried apples to make one tall cake big enough to feed the wedding party and guests. The higher the cake, the more popular the bride. We hate to dispel beloved legends, but this one probably isn't true. All of the layers from the neighboring cooks, baked in pans and skillets of varying sizes, would have different diameters and thicknesses, so stacking a tall cake with even sides would be difficult. What's more, an apple stack cake should be assembled while the layers and filling are still warm and then left to "ripen" for two to three days, so it's not something you could do (with the tastiest results) at a reception.

RONNI LUNDY

AUTHOR OF
VICTUALS: AN APPALACHIAN JOURNEY, WITH RECIPES

Like all apple stack cakes, Lundy's has best results after a few days. This gives the layers and filling a chance to marry while solidifying the cake so it's easier to slice.

APPLE STACK CAKE

Recipe, page 38

DAMARIS PHILLIPS

AUTHOR OF
SOUTHERN GIRL MEETS VEGETARIAN BOY

Inspired by her aunt Julie's blackberry jam cake, Phillips created this upgraded, three-layer version with a rich caramel-cream cheese frosting.

BLACKBERRY JAM CAKE

Recipe, page 38

BLACKBERRY
JAM CAKE

BY **DAMARIS PHILLIPS**

When I was a girl growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, holidays were spent at Aunt Julie's house. It was a beautiful brick home with a large front porch, pocket doors, and tiny spaces underneath the stairs where my cousins and I would play happily. Family gatherings were loud, somewhat disjointed events with the adults laughing from the dining room and the kids carrying on from our own table in the nook just off the kitchen.

The menu was always a potluck, always served buffet style, and the plates always seemed too small to fit all the offerings. After we overfilled our dishes, we would then scatter to enjoy the feast.

It was the desserts that brought the whole family back together after dinner. Aunt Julie would set out a parade of homemade treats, all lined up in a row on the counter: apple pie, pecan pie, pumpkin pie, chocolate cake, yellow cake, and coconut cake. They were all delicious, but I had two particular favorites—and they came out only at Christmas: mincemeat pie, which is a dessert for another story, and blackberry jam cake with caramel frosting.

Eating a slice of Aunt Julie's jam cake reminds me of sliding into a warm bed. Imagine the comfort of worn quilts, the excitement of clean sheets, and the sigh of relaxing into a soft mattress and you'll have an idea of how a bite of this cake makes you feel. It is a moist and hearty spice cake with a zip of tartness from blackberries and a slather of slightly salty caramel frosting all over. In short, it is perfect.

I have always loved eating this cake, but it wasn't until I attempted to make one myself that I really began to understand all of its nuances. Here is what I learned. The spices are key elements. The amounts of cinnamon, allspice, and cloves I have called for in this recipe give the layers nicely balanced warmth, but you can feel free to bump up the spices a bit if you want to create something a little more dramatic.

I also discovered that a cream cheese frosting is a must. Unlike the caramel icing that is traditionally paired with blackberry jam cake, my caramel-cream cheese version is a little bit savory, which tempers the sweetness of the cake layers.

But above all, I realized that the most important ingredient in this recipe is the jam. You can use whatever brand of seedless blackberry jam or preserves you like in the cake batter, but just make sure it doesn't contain additional pectin, which will make the jam much too thick. I made the mistake of using the wrong kind of jam once, and it produced a dense brick of a cake that even our backyard opossum, Sir Phillip, refused to eat.

I could tell you that I love this cake because it connects me to a special little piece of Kentucky's culinary history, which it does. I could tell you that it's also a crowd-pleaser, which it always is. I could even tell you that the finished product makes a subtly impressive sight when it's displayed on a milk glass cake stand—and, oh, how pretty it is. But the truth is, I love this blackberry jam cake because it reminds me of the warm, wonderful glow that shines from a home that's filled with a family's laughter.

A WELL-TRAVELED RECIPE

Kentuckians like to boast that the jam cake is as original to their state as bourbon and the Derby. While there is a proliferation of jam cakes in old community cookbooks from that area, the recipe is actually a gift from German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and then ventured to Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and other places, bringing the European tradition of the jam-filled spice cake with them. Traditionally baked during the holidays, these confections were made using homemade berry jam, typically blackberry or blueberry, which the cook had put up in the summer. (According to an old wives' tale, if you don't use homemade jam in your cake layers, the fruit mixture will fall to the bottom of the pans.) Along with an abundance of spices, the original recipes also featured nuts of the region, such as black walnuts and pecans, and were iced with a satiny smooth caramel frosting. Jam cakes keep well and taste even better after a few days if covered and kept in the refrigerator—the waiting requires some restraint but is worth it!

LEMON-AND-CHOCOLATE
DOBERGE CAKE

BY **DAVID GUAS**

When you meet someone from your hometown, it's customary to ask them where they went to high school. But if you were born and raised in New Orleans, like me, the next question is usually, "Who made your birthday cakes?" This might seem like a weird thing to ask if you grew up somewhere else, but not to us natives. My wife, Simone, who also happens to be from New Orleans, posed the all-important question on our second date. It turns out that we both got the Half and Half Doberge Cake from Joe Gambino's Bakery—and we've been married for 19 years.

At a New Orleans birthday party, a doberge (DOH-bash) cake is as essential to the event as the presents. Gambino's, Haydel's, and nearly every bakery in the city offers its own take on this showstopping dessert. When I was growing up, it didn't matter if you had pony rides or a whole petting zoo at your birthday party. If you didn't have the right kind of cake, the other kids might talk about you the next day. "Oh, he didn't have a doberge."

The definition of a special-occasion cake, a doberge is made of six to nine thin layers of vanilla sponge cake sandwiched with a custard or creamy filling, then covered in rich frosting. While you can get a doberge in a single flavor such as chocolate (my sister Tracy's preference), the most popular option is the "half and half," seamlessly combining two flavors into one cake.

My favorite is chocolate-lemon, which is what my mother would order from Gambino's for my birthday. It is a chocolate-filled-and-iced cake on one side and a lemon-filled-and-iced cake on the other. If chocolate and lemon sound like an odd combination, you're missing the point. The two flavors aren't meant to be eaten in the same bite but savored separately.

After singing the birthday song, everyone would crowd around my mother, the designated cake cutter, to wait for the first slice, which had to be right at the dividing line where chocolate met lemon. The goal was to get an equal amount of both flavors in one piece. Imagine trying to slice a six-layer cake with 20 pairs of eyes on you.

As a kid with a growing interest in cooking and food, I obsessed over this mysterious dessert. I couldn't figure out how Gambino's made it as one cake. I thought they must have used some fancy, specially made pans. Eventually, I wised up. I also became a pastry chef—and now know the secret to the half and half. Spread between each of the identical cake layers is a chocolate custard that covers one half and a lemon filling that covers the other half. The layers are stacked and covered halfway with lemon frosting and halfway with chocolate. It takes me a full day and requires every bowl in my kitchen—and I make desserts for a living.

My boys, Kemp and Spencer, have always thought they were from New Orleans, but truth be told, they were born in Washington, D.C. However, Simone and I thought it was cute and never wanted them to imagine anything different, so we adopted the customary New Orleans rituals, including doberge cake. Starting with their first birthdays, they got a half and half, made by me. As they grew up, they each settled on just one flavor: lemon for Kemp and chocolate for Spencer. It's interesting how DNA works.

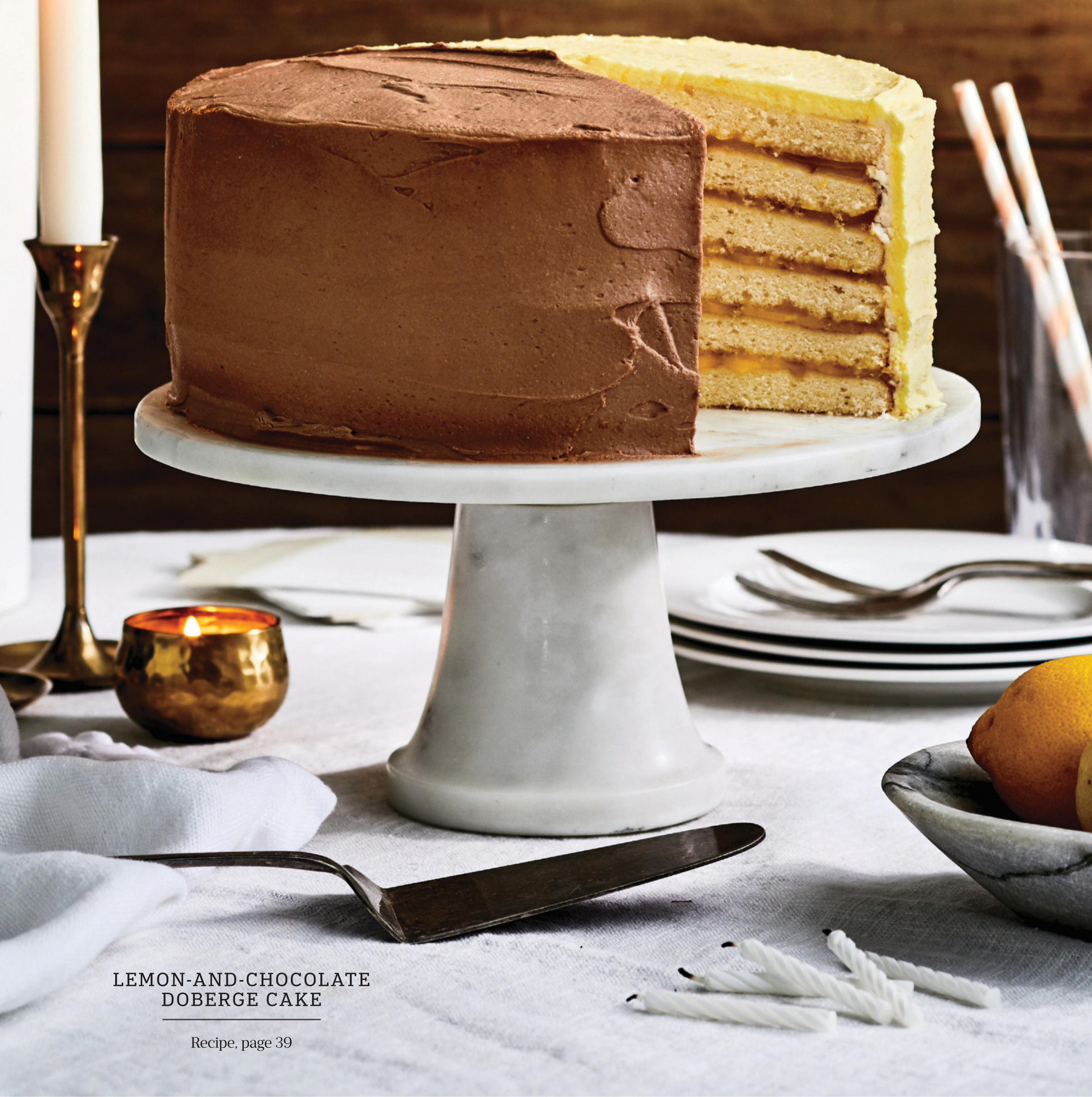
A NEW ORLEANS ORIGINAL

As a way to improve her family's financial situation during the Depression, Beulah Levy Ledner opened Mrs. Charles Ledner's Superior Home Baking from her New Orleans home. Ledner became known for her miniature kuchens and lemon meringue pies, but there was one recipe that would make her a legend in New Orleans history. After some experimenting with the Hungarian Dobos torte, which is a multilayered sponge cake with chocolate buttercream filling, she came up with a brilliant spin-off: a nine-layer yellow cake filled with chocolate custard and covered in chocolate frosting. To make it a true New Orleans dessert, Ledner added a French twist to the name, calling it "doberge." The city fell in love with the cake and crowned her the "Doberge Queen of New Orleans." She later sold her bakery and recipes to the owners of Joe Gambino's Bakery, who continue to make the dessert the same way.

DAVID GUAS

OWNER OF
BAYOU BAKERY
IN ARLINGTON,
VIRGINIA

A half and half is truly a labor of love. We adapted Guas' recipe to include store-bought chocolate pudding and lemon curd to save time and steps in the kitchen.



LEMON-AND-CHOCOLATE
DOBERGE CAKE

Recipe, page 39

Apple Stack Cake

ACTIVE 55 MIN. - TOTAL 5 HOURS, 45 MIN., PLUS 2 DAYS RESTING

SERVES 10

1	**lb. unsulfured dried apples (about 5 cups)**
	Vegetable shortening, for greasing
6	**cups all-purpose flour, divided**
1	**tsp. baking soda**
½	**tsp. salt**
⅔	**cup butter, softened**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
1	**cup sorghum syrup**
1	**cup whole buttermilk**
2	**large eggs, beaten**
1	**cup packed dark brown sugar**
½	**tsp. ground mace**
	Powdered sugar, for topping (optional)

1. Start the filling first. Put the apples in a Dutch oven, and add enough water to cover the apples by 2 inches. Bring to a boil over high; then turn down the heat to low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until apples are tender enough to mash, 1 to 1½ hours. You may need to add a little more water to keep the apples from sticking, but you don't want the final mixture to be soupy.

2. While the filling continues to cook, prepare the skillet for baking, and make the dough. Liberally grease the inside of a 9-inch cast-iron skillet with shortening, and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of the flour, shaking and turning to coat the bottom of the skillet and about 1 inch up the sides.

3. Sift 5½ cups of the flour with baking soda and salt, and set aside. Place the butter and granulated sugar in a large bowl, and beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until blended, about 3 minutes. Add the sorghum syrup, and beat 1 minute to blend. Whisk together the buttermilk and the eggs in a small bowl. (This recipe does not use baking powder, so buttermilk is necessary to activate the baking soda.)

4. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture alternately with the egg mixture in 5 additions, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat on low speed after each addition to incorporate. Cover and chill at least 1 hour or up to 2 hours.

5. After the apples are cooked, stir the brown sugar and mace into the apples until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat, and mash with a potato masher until a thick puree forms with lumps no larger than a pea. (You can also pulse the mixture in the bowl of a food processor 15 times.) If mixture is too runny, return to medium heat, and continue to cook, stirring constantly, until liquid evaporates and mixture is the consistency of apple butter. Cover to keep warm.

6. Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously sprinkle a flat surface with some of the remaining flour, and scrape the chilled dough onto it. With floured hands, shape dough into a log about 10 inches long. Using a sharp, floured knife, cut into 5 (2-inch) pieces. With floured hands, roll each piece lightly in the flour, and shape into a ball. Place 4 of the balls on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper, cover with plastic wrap, and chill until ready to use.

7. Pat remaining 1 ball into a disk. Place dough disk in the greased and floured skillet, and, pressing lightly with floured palm and fingers, flatten it evenly so it spreads out to just touch the edges of the skillet all around. (Don't pat too hard and don't press it up against the side of the skillet or it will stick.) Evenly prick the surface of the dough lightly with a fork.

8. Bake in preheated oven until the top is golden and the cake has pulled slightly away from the edges of the skillet, about 25 to 30 minutes. It will not rise like a normal cake layer but will look like a big cookie, only much more tender. Let cool in skillet on wire rack for 5 minutes. Run a butter knife around the inside edge of the skillet, and gently nudge the layer underneath to loosen. Turn cake layer out onto a rack, and allow to cool for about 5 minutes. Transfer layer to a cake plate, and spread warm apple mixture over the top, to the edges. The apple filling should be about ¼ inch thick, using about ¾ cup of the mixture per layer.

9. Clean inside of skillet with a paper towel, and cool on rack until barely warm, 10 minutes. Repeat Steps 7 and 8 for each dough ball, greasing and flouring skillet for each. Proceed, stacking each successive layer while warm and spreading with apple mixture. Leave the top layer bare. Save remaining apple mixture for another use.

10. Allow cake to cool completely, about 30 minutes. Wrap cake in cheesecloth, and then wrap in several layers of plastic wrap. Allow to "ripen" at room temperature for 2 to 3 days before cutting and serving. Dust the top of the cake with powdered sugar, if desired.

Blackberry Jam Cake

ACTIVE 35 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 35 MIN.

SERVES 12

	CAKE LAYERS
2¾	**cups all-purpose flour**
2	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
1½	**tsp. baking soda**
1½	**tsp. baking powder**
1½	**tsp. ground cloves**
1½	**tsp. ground allspice**
1	**tsp. salt**
2	**cups granulated sugar**
5	**large eggs**
1½	**cups vegetable oil**
1¼	**cups seedless blackberry jam or preserves**
2	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1½	**cups whole buttermilk**
1	**cup finely chopped pecans or black walnuts**
1	**cup golden raisins**
	FROSTING
3	**(8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened**
¼	**cup granulated sugar**
½	**cup jarred caramel topping**
½	**cup heavy cream**
¼	**tsp. salt**
	GARNISHES
1	**tsp. finely chopped pecans or black walnuts**
	Fresh blackberries

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray 3 (9-inch) round cake pans with cooking spray; line bottoms with parchment paper.

2. Prepare the Cake Layers: Whisk together first 7 ingredients in a large bowl; set aside.

3. Place sugar and eggs in bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment; beat on medium speed until thick and smooth, 3 minutes. Change to paddle attachment. Add oil, jam, and vanilla extract; beat until combined, 1 minute.

4. Add half of the flour mixture to jam mixture; beat on low speed until just combined, 20 to 45 seconds. Add buttermilk; beat on low speed until just combined. Add remaining flour mixture; beat on low speed until smooth and combined, about 30 seconds. Fold in nuts and raisins; divide evenly among prepared pans.

5. Bake in preheated oven until edges of cake layers are just starting to pull from sides of pans and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes, rotating pans from top to bottom rack halfway through baking. Press gently on top of layers to flatten any doming; cool in pans 10 minutes. Remove from pans to wire racks; cool completely, about 1 hour.

6. Prepare the Frosting: Place cream cheese and sugar in bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment; beat on medium-low speed until combined. Add caramel topping; beat until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. With mixer running, slowly pour in cream and add salt. Beat on medium speed until thick and smooth, 3 to 4 minutes. (Mixture will look runny at first but will thicken as the cream is whipped.)

7. Transfer about two-thirds of the Frosting to a piping bag. Place 1 cake layer on a serving plate. Pipe frosting on top of layer, using a circular motion and starting from the outside and gradually moving to the center. Repeat process with remaining layers. Cover sides with remaining frosting. (Drag the back of a spoon in a side-to-side motion across the frosting for a textured look.) Garnish cake with nuts and blackberries.

Lemon-and-Chocolate Doberge Cake

ACTIVE 45 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 50 MIN.

SERVES 12

CAKE LAYERS

4½ cups bleached cake flour
1 Tbsp. baking powder
¾ tsp. salt
1½ cups unsalted butter, softened
2 cups granulated sugar
5 large eggs
3 large egg yolks
1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
1½ cups whole milk

BUTTERCREAM FROSTINGS

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
5 cups powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ tsp. salt
4 Tbsp. whole milk, plus more as needed, divided
½ Tbsp. lemon zest plus 2 tsp. fresh juice (from 1 lemon)
1–2 drops yellow liquid food coloring
2 tsp. unsweetened cocoa
1 oz. finely chopped bittersweet chocolate

ADDITIONAL INGREDIENTS

1⅔ cups jarred lemon curd
1⅔ cups refrigerated prepared chocolate pudding

1. Prepare the Cake Layers: Preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. Set aside.

2. Beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add eggs and egg yolks, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.

3. Add flour mixture to egg mixture alternately with milk in 5 additions, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat on low speed until just combined after each addition. Divide batter evenly among 3 greased and floured 9-inch round cake pans.

4. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 23 to 25 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove Cake Layers from pans to wire racks; cool completely, about 30 minutes. When cool, gently slice each layer in half horizontally, making 6 thin layers.

5. Prepare the Buttercream Frostings: Beat butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until creamy, about 3 minutes. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add powdered sugar, and beat until smooth. Add vanilla, salt, and 3 tablespoons of the milk; beat until smooth, about 1 minute. (Add up to 1 tablespoon more milk if needed to reach desired consistency.) Remove and reserve 1 cup of frosting in a small bowl. Divide remaining frosting evenly between 2 medium bowls.

6. Stir lemon zest and juice into 1 medium bowl of frosting. Stir in yellow food coloring to achieve desired color.

7. Add cocoa to remaining medium bowl of frosting, and stir until smooth. Place chocolate and remaining 1 tablespoon milk in a small microwavable bowl. Microwave on HIGH until chocolate melts and mixture is smooth, about 20 seconds, stirring every 10 seconds. Cool 5 minutes, and stir into chocolate frosting.

8. Place 1 layer of cake on a serving plate. Spread about ⅓ cup lemon curd on half of layer. Spread about ⅓ cup chocolate pudding on the opposite half. Repeat process with 4 more Cake Layers. Top with remaining layer. (Indicate on a sticky note which flavor is on each side; attach to serving plate.) Spread 1 cup reserved plain frosting in a thin layer over sides. Chill 1 hour.

9. Spread lemon frosting over top and frosted sides of lemon half of cake. Spread chocolate frosting over top and frosted sides of chocolate half.

ONE-BOWL WONDERS

Have your cake (on a Wednesday) and eat it too. These single-layer desserts are as easy to whip up as any boxed mix whenever you're in the mood for a little something sweet

TEXT AND RECIPES BY **ANN TAYLOR PITTMAN** | PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **EMILY NABORS HALL** | PROP STYLING BY **KAY E. CLARKE**

YOU'LL FIND A HOMEMADE layer cake in my house maybe two or three times a year, a special treat for a birthday or another celebration. But from-scratch snack cakes have a semi-permanent spot on the kitchen counter. That's because they're easier to make, a quick pick-me-up you can whisk together (literally) on a whim. These casual desserts have a slightly heartier texture than the delicate crumb of a layer or pound cake, but they still satisfy the same craving for moist, tender forkfuls complete with delightful frostings.

You'll need only one bowl to make these five recipes. Stir together the batter, and while it's baking or cooling, quickly wash the bowl to use it to mix up the frosting. You can serve the cake right out of the pan to keep things simple—that's the beauty of it.

Lest you think that because they're easier to make they're less delicious, consider our fresh raspberry cake with salted milk chocolate frosting, the supremely moist coconut poke cake, or the strawberry one flavored with rosé wine. They might just become mainstays in your home too.

STRAWBERRY-ROSÉ SNACK CAKE

Recipe, page 47

JUICED UP

This classic gets an extra boost of flavor and color from bottled carrot juice. Look for the bright orange drink in the refrigerated juice section at the supermarket. Check that it's made only with carrots and no other ingredients.

CARROT-WALNUT SNACK CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Recipe, page 46

HUMMINGBIRD
SNACK CAKE
WITH BROWN
BUTTER
FROSTING

Recipe, page 47

RASPBERRY
SNACK CAKE
WITH SALTED
MILK CHOCOLATE
FROSTING

Recipe, page 46

TRIPLE-COCONUT POKE SNACK CAKE

Recipe, page 46

SUNKEN TREASURE

True to its name, this cake is poked all over to make holes that hold a rich filling of sweetened condensed coconut milk. Make sure that it's still hot when you reach this step so it absorbs the liquid as it should.

Carrot-Walnut Snack Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 30 MIN.

MAKES 1 (8-INCH) CAKE

Let the cream cheese and butter come to room temperature while cake cools so they'll be ready to use for the frosting.

CAKE

2	**cups shredded carrots (about 4 large carrots)**
⅔	**cup packed light brown sugar**
¼	**cup honey**
½	**tsp. kosher salt**
½	**cup refrigerated bottled carrot juice**
¼	**cup canola oil**
1½	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1	**large egg**
2	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
¾	**tsp. baking soda**
1½	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**cup coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted, divided**

FROSTING

8	**oz. cream cheese, softened**
3	**Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened**
1	**tsp. vanilla extract**
⅛	**tsp. kosher salt**
1½	**cups powdered sugar**

1. Prepare the Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides. Toss together carrots, brown sugar, honey, and salt in a large bowl; let stand 10 minutes. Add carrot juice, oil, and vanilla. Crack egg into bowl. Pierce egg using tip of a whisk, and lightly beat into carrot juice mixture. Whisk in cinnamon and baking soda. Fold in flour and ½ cup walnuts.

2. Spread batter evenly in prepared baking pan. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 35 to 38 minutes. Remove from oven; cool in pan 5 minutes. Using parchment paper overhang, lift Cake from pan and transfer to a wire rack. Cool completely, 30 minutes.

3. Prepare the Frosting: Wash and dry the bowl. Add cream cheese and butter; beat with an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Beat in vanilla and salt. Add powdered sugar; beat on low speed until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Spread Frosting over cooled Cake. Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup walnuts.

Raspberry Snack Cake with Salted Milk Chocolate Frosting

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 50 MIN.

MAKES 1 (8-INCH) CAKE

A hint of cardamom gives this dessert unexpected depth. If you don't have that spice, substitute the same amount of ground ginger or cinnamon.

CAKE

1½	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
¾	**tsp. baking soda**
½	**tsp. kosher salt**
¼	**tsp. ground cardamom**
¾	**cup whole buttermilk**
¼	**cup canola oil**
1½	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1	**large egg**
1	**cup fresh raspberries, patted dry, plus more for serving (optional)**

FROSTING

8	**oz. milk chocolate, chopped**
½	**cup unsalted butter, softened**
½	**tsp. vanilla extract**
¼	**tsp. kosher salt**
1½	**cups powdered sugar**

1. Prepare the Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides. Whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, and cardamom in a large microwavable bowl. Using a spoon, make a well in center of mixture; pour buttermilk, oil, and vanilla into well. Crack egg into buttermilk mixture. Pierce egg using tip of a whisk; lightly beat together. Fold egg mixture into flour mixture in bowl to form a smooth batter.

2. Spread half of the batter evenly in prepared baking pan; sprinkle evenly with ½ cup raspberries. Spread remaining batter evenly over berries; sprinkle with remaining ½ cup berries. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 35 to 38 minutes. Remove from oven; cool in pan 5 minutes. Using parchment paper, lift Cake from pan and transfer to a wire rack. Cool completely, 1 hour.

3. While Cake bakes, prepare Frosting: Wash and dry the microwavable bowl. Place chocolate in bowl; microwave on HIGH until melted, about 90 seconds, stirring every 30 seconds. Cool at room temperature 15 minutes.

4. Add butter to chocolate in bowl; beat with an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth and creamy, 1 minute. Beat in vanilla and salt. Add powdered sugar; beat on low speed until smooth and creamy, 1 minute. Spread Frosting over cooled Cake. Serve with additional raspberries, if desired.

Triple-Coconut Poke Snack Cake

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 45 MIN.,
PLUS 1 HOUR COOLING

MAKES 1 (8-INCH) CAKE

You can substitute regular sweetened condensed milk and ½ teaspoon coconut extract for the coconut kind.

CAKE

1½	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
2	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. kosher salt**
¾	**cup well-shaken and stirred coconut milk (from 1 [15-oz.] can)**
¼	**cup canola oil**
1½	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1	**large egg**
½	**cup sweetened condensed coconut milk (from 1 [14-oz.] can)**

FROSTING

1	**cup heavy whipping cream**
⅛	**tsp. kosher salt**
¼	**cup sweetened condensed coconut milk (from 1 [14-oz.] can)**

ADDITIONAL INGREDIENT

⅓	**cup lightly salted toasted coconut chips (such as Bare or Dang)**

1. Prepare the Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking spray, and line with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides.

2. Whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Using a spoon, make a well in center of mixture; pour coconut milk, oil, and vanilla into well. Crack egg into coconut milk mixture. Pierce egg using tip of a whisk, and lightly beat together. Whisk egg mixture into flour mixture in bowl to form a smooth batter.

3. Spread batter evenly in prepared baking pan. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from oven. Immediately poke holes all over Cake using blunt end of a skewer; spread sweetened condensed coconut milk evenly over Cake. Cool in pan 5 minutes. Using parchment paper overhang, lift from pan and transfer to a wire rack. Cool completely, about 1 hour.

4. Prepare the Frosting: Wash and dry the bowl. Add whipping cream and salt; beat with an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on medium-high speed until soft peaks form, about 3 minutes. Increase mixer speed to high; beat until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Add sweetened condensed coconut milk; beat on medium speed until well combined, about 1 minute. Spread Frosting over cooled Cake, and sprinkle with coconut chips.

Strawberry-Rosé Snack Cake

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 40 MIN.,
PLUS 1 HOUR COOLING

MAKES 1 (8-INCH) CAKE

Instead of using flavored gelatin, this pink dessert is made with freeze-dried strawberries, which have a vibrant color and more concentrated flavor.

CAKE

1½	**cups freeze-dried strawberries, divided**
1½	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
2	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. kosher salt**
⅔	**cup rosé wine**
¼	**cup canola oil**
1	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1	**large egg**

FROSTING

¼	**cup unsalted butter, softened**
4	**oz. cream cheese, softened**
¼	**tsp. kosher salt**
2¼	**cups powdered sugar**

1. Prepare the Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides. Process all of the freeze-dried strawberries in a mini food processor until powdered, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Measure 3 tablespoons powdered strawberries into a medium bowl. (Reserve remaining powdered strawberries in the food processor for Frosting.) Add flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt to bowl. Using a spoon, make a well in center of flour mixture, and pour rosé wine, oil, and vanilla into well. Crack egg into rosé mixture. Pierce egg using tip of a whisk, and lightly beat together. Fold egg mixture into flour mixture to form a smooth batter.

2. Spread batter evenly in prepared baking pan. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 25 to 28 minutes. Remove from oven, and cool in pan 5 minutes. Using parchment paper overhang, lift Cake from pan and transfer to a wire rack. Cool completely, about 1 hour.

3. Prepare the Frosting: Wash and dry the bowl. Place butter, cream cheese, and salt in bowl, and beat with an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium-high speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Add reserved powdered strawberries, and beat on medium-high speed until thoroughly combined, about 1 minute. Add powdered sugar, and beat on low speed until mixture is smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Spread Frosting over cooled Cake.

Hummingbird Snack Cake with Brown Butter Frosting

ACTIVE 20 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 15 MIN.,
PLUS 1 HOUR, 25 MIN. COOLING

MAKES 1 (8-INCH) CAKE

Browning the butter in the microwave saves you a pan to clean up. The butter will pop and spatter, so weigh down the parchment that covers the bowl with a plate. Bonus: The parchment also keeps the plate clean.

CAKE

2	**medium bananas**
½	**cup canned crushed pineapple in juice (undrained, from 1 [8-oz.] can)**
¼	**cup canola oil**
1½	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1	**large egg**
¾	**cup granulated sugar**
¾	**tsp. baking soda**
½	**tsp. kosher salt**
1½	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
¼	**tsp. ground allspice**
⅔	**cup chopped pecans, toasted**

FROSTING

¾	**cup unsalted butter**
2	**Tbsp. heavy whipping cream**
1	**tsp. vanilla extract**
¼	**tsp. kosher salt**
1½	**cups powdered sugar**

1. Prepare the Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides. Mash bananas in a large microwavable bowl until nearly smooth. Stir in pineapple, oil, and vanilla. Crack egg into bowl. Pierce egg using tip of a whisk, and lightly beat into pineapple mixture. Whisk in granulated sugar, baking soda, and salt. Fold in flour, cinnamon, and allspice. Fold in pecans.

2. Spread batter evenly in prepared baking pan. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 33 to 35 minutes. Remove from oven, and cool in pan 5 minutes. Using parchment paper overhang, lift Cake from pan and transfer to a wire rack. Cool completely, 1 hour.

3. While Cake bakes, prepare the Frosting: Wash and dry the microwavable bowl. Place butter in bowl. Cover bowl with a sheet of parchment paper; place a microwavable plate on top of parchment to cover bowl. Microwave on HIGH until butter is amber colored, 6 to 9 minutes. (Butter will pop as it browns.) Remove from microwave, and cool 20 minutes. Transfer bowl to refrigerator, and chill until butter starts to solidify, about 1 hour.

4. Remove butter from refrigerator; add whipping cream to bowl. Beat mixture using an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on medium speed until smooth and fluffy, about 1 minute. Beat in vanilla and salt. Add powdered sugar; beat on low speed until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Spread Frosting over cooled Cake.

HAPPY LITTLE EASTER

Sweet single-serving treats that will upstage any candy in your basket

RECIPES BY **PAM LOLLEY** | PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **TORIE COX** | PROP STYLING BY **CLAIRE SPOLLEN**

COCONUT CUPCAKES WITH BIRDS' NESTS

Recipe, page 51

Strawberry Chiffon Mini Pies

ACTIVE 50 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 10 MIN., PLUS 5 HOURS, 15 MIN. CHILLING

MAKES 6

2 Tbsp. powdered sugar, divided
1 (14.1-oz.) pkg. refrigerated piecrusts
1 qt. fresh strawberries, hulled, plus more small halved strawberries for garnish
1¼ cups granulated sugar, divided
1½ tsp. unflavored gelatin
2 large pasteurized eggs, separated
2 Tbsp. strawberry-flavored gelatin (such as Jell-O)
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
¼ tsp. kosher salt
2 cups heavy cream, divided

STRAWBERRY
CHIFFON
MINI PIES

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly dust work surface with 1 tablespoon of the powdered sugar. Unroll 1 piecrust on top of powdered sugar, and roll into a 12-inch circle. Use a 6-inch round cutter to cut 2 (6-inch) circles. Reroll the scraps once, and cut 1 more circle. Repeat procedure with remaining piecrust and powdered sugar to have a total of 6 mini piecrusts. Fit each circle into a 5-inch round mini pie pan; fold edges under, and crimp. Prick bottom and sides with a fork. Chill 15 minutes.

2. Place pie pans on a cookie sheet. Line each crust with a small square of parchment paper, and fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake in preheated oven until crust is set and edges are lightly browned, 12 to 15 minutes. Carefully remove weights and parchment, and continue baking until crusts are golden brown, about 5 minutes. Remove to a wire rack, and cool until ready to use.

3. Process strawberries in a food processor until very smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. Strain pureed strawberries through a fine mesh strainer into a 2-cup glass measuring cup to get 1½ cups juice. (Reserve any extra juice for another use.) Discard solids. Stir together 1½ cups strawberry juice and ½ cup of the granulated sugar in a small saucepan over medium. Bring mixture to a boil, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring often, until mixture is reduced to 1 cup, 8 to 10 minutes.

4. Sprinkle unflavored gelatin over ¼ cup cool water in a small bowl, and set aside. Whisk together egg yolks in a medium bowl, and slowly add about half of cooked strawberry juice mixture to yolks, whisking constantly. Slowly whisk yolk mixture back into strawberry juice mixture in pan. Cook, whisking constantly, until mixture has thickened slightly, 3 to 4 minutes. Whisk in unflavored gelatin mixture to combine. Whisk in strawberry gelatin, lemon juice, and salt to combine completely. Remove from heat, and transfer mixture to a large bowl. Chill mixture until thickened slightly, 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes, stirring after 30 minutes.

5. Beat egg whites with an electric mixer on high speed, until soft peaks form, about 8 minutes. (Pasteurized eggs take longer to whip up than regular eggs.) Gradually add ¼ cup of the granulated sugar, and beat until stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Gently whisk strawberry mixture to incorporate any lumps. Gradually fold egg white mixture into strawberry mixture until thoroughly combined.

6. Beat 1 cup of the heavy cream with a heavy-duty stand mixer on high speed, using the whisk attachment, until foamy. Gradually add ¼ cup of the granulated sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Gradually fold whipped cream into strawberry mixture. Spoon mixture (about ¾ cup) into prepared piecrusts. Chill at least 4 hours or overnight.

7. Beat remaining 1 cup heavy cream with a heavy-duty stand mixer on high speed, using the whisk attachment, until foamy. Gradually add remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar, and beat until stiff peaks form. Dollop or pipe whipped cream on top of pies, and garnish.

Raspberry-Rhubarb Bars

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 30 MIN., PLUS 1 HOUR COOLING

MAKES 16

CRUST

2½	cups all-purpose flour
¾	cup toasted slivered almonds
⅔	cup powdered sugar
½	tsp. kosher salt
1	cup butter, cubed

FILLING

1½	cups toasted sliced almonds
1	cup granulated sugar
2	Tbsp. all-purpose flour
¼	tsp. kosher salt
10	Tbsp. butter, cubed
2	large eggs
½	tsp. almond extract
2	large fresh rhubarb stalks
1	pt. fresh raspberries
	Powdered sugar

1. Prepare the Crust: Preheat oven to 350°F. Pulse flour, slivered almonds, powdered sugar, and salt in a food processor until thoroughly combined and almonds are finely chopped, 8 to 10 times. Add butter; pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal, 8 or 9 times.

2. Line bottom and sides of a 13 x 9-inch pan with aluminum foil, allowing 2 to 3 inches to extend over sides; lightly coat foil with cooking spray. Press flour mixture evenly in bottom of prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven until beginning to brown around edges, about 20 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack, about 20 minutes.

3. Prepare the Filling: Pulse sliced almonds, granulated sugar, flour, and salt in a food processor until nuts are very finely ground, 10 to 12 times. Add butter, and pulse until fully incorporated, 10 to 12 times. Add eggs and almond extract, and pulse just until mixture is combined, 5 or 6 times. Spread almond mixture evenly over cooled Crust.

4. Trim rhubarb, and slice into 1½- x 2-inch pieces. Slice in half horizontally, and cut into ½-inch-wide strips. Place strips of rhubarb, color side up, and raspberries evenly on top.

5. Bake at 350°F until a wooden pick inserted into center comes out clean and mixture is golden brown on top, 45 to 50 minutes. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack, about 1 hour. Using aluminum foil as handles, remove bars from pan. Dust with powdered sugar, cut into squares, and serve.

RHUBARB REPLACEMENT

Fresh rhubarb adds a tart note to these sweet, buttery bars. If that's not available, use 1 cup of sliced strawberries.

Coconut Cupcakes with Birds' Nests

ACTIVE 40 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 30 MIN.

MAKES 2 DOZEN

COCONUT CUPCAKES

1 cup butter, softened
2 cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs
3 cups bleached cake flour
1 Tbsp. baking powder
½ tsp. kosher salt
1 cup well-shaken and stirred coconut milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
½ tsp. coconut extract

COCONUT-CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
½ cup butter, softened
1 Tbsp. well-shaken and stirred coconut milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ tsp. coconut extract
⅛ tsp. kosher salt
1 (16-oz.) pkg. powdered sugar

NEST GARNISH

2 cups unsweetened shaved coconut, divided
1 Tbsp. powdered sugar, divided
Pastel-colored edible luster dust in two hues
Small candy eggs (such as Cadbury Mini Eggs)

1. Prepare the cupcakes: Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat butter with a heavy-duty stand mixer on medium speed until creamy. Gradually add sugar, beating until light and fluffy. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition.

2. Stir together cake flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. Add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with coconut milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating at low speed just until blended after each addition. Beat in vanilla and coconut extracts.

3. Spoon batter into 2 (12-cup) muffin pans lined with paper baking cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 15 to 18 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin pans to wire racks, and cool completely, about 30 minutes.

4. Prepare the frosting: Beat together cream cheese, butter, coconut milk, vanilla and coconut extracts, and salt with a heavy-duty stand mixer on medium speed until creamy and smooth. Gradually add powdered sugar on low speed until well blended. Increase speed to medium-high, and beat until light and fluffy. Evenly frost cupcakes.

5. Prepare the garnish: Place about one-third of the shaved coconut and ½ tablespoon of the powdered sugar in a ziplock plastic bag. Add a small amount of luster dust to bag, and seal. Shake bag to coat coconut. Add more luster dust, if desired, until preferred color is reached. Transfer coconut to a fine mesh strainer, and sift off excess powdered sugar. Transfer coconut to a small bowl until ready to use. Repeat process with half of remaining shaved coconut, remaining powdered sugar, and another color of luster dust. Reserve rest of coconut to leave uncolored. Transfer all coconut to a medium bowl, and gently stir to create a multicolored mixture.

6. Top each cupcake with 1 to 2 teaspoons coconut, and lightly press an indention in center. Add 2 or 3 candy eggs to each nest.

FLORAL FINISH

To top the Bundt cakes, make these (edible!) dried-pineapple flowers a day in advance so they can dry fully overnight.

Carrot-Pineapple Mini Bundt Cakes with Buttermilk-Vanilla Glaze

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 25 MIN.

MAKES 1 DOZEN

MINI BUNDT CAKES

1	cup granulated sugar
1	cup firmly packed light brown sugar
½	cup butter, softened
½	cup canola oil
3	large eggs
2½	cups all-purpose flour
2	tsp. baking soda
1½	tsp. ground cinnamon
½	tsp. kosher salt
¼	tsp. ground nutmeg
¾	cup whole buttermilk
2	tsp. vanilla extract
3	large carrots, grated (about 1¾ cups)
1	(8-oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained
¾	cup sweetened flaked coconut
¾	cup chopped toasted pecans

BUTTERMILK-VANILLA GLAZE

2	cups powdered sugar
2	Tbsp. butter, melted
2	tsp. vanilla extract
2-3	Tbsp. whole buttermilk

GARNISH

Pineapple Flowers (recipe follows)

1. Prepare the Mini Bundt Cakes: Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat together granulated sugar, brown sugar, and butter with a heavy-duty stand mixer on medium speed until well blended. Add oil; beat until blended. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition.

2. Whisk together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg in a medium bowl. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat in vanilla at low speed just until blended. Fold in carrots, drained pineapple, coconut, and pecans. Spoon batter into 2 heavily greased (with cooking spray) 6-cup mini-Bundt pans, filling each about three-fourths full.

3. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 18 to 23 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks for 10 minutes. Gently run a knife around edges. Remove from pans; cool completely, about 30 minutes.

4. Prepare the Buttermilk-Vanilla Glaze: Stir together powdered sugar, melted butter, vanilla, and 2 tablespoons of the buttermilk in a medium bowl. Gradually add remaining buttermilk, 1 teaspoon at a time, as needed for desired consistency. Spoon glaze over tops of cooled cakes, allowing to drip down sides. Garnish with Pineapple Flowers.

PINEAPPLE FLOWERS

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS,
PLUS 8 HOURS DRYING

MAKES 1 DOZEN

Preheat oven to 225°F. Using a very sharp knife, cut the top off 1 fresh pineapple. Then remove the skin, slicing very close to the fruit and leaving the eyes (seeds). Using a ⅛ teaspoon measure, scoop out the eyes. (You will have little round holes all over the pineapple.) Lay pineapple on its side, and cut 12 very thin (about ⅛-inch-thick) slices. Blot pineapple slices dry with paper towels. Place on parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake 30 minutes. Using tongs, carefully turn slices over, return pan to oven, and bake 30 more minutes. Continue to bake in 15-minute increments, turning each time, until they are dried and beginning to turn golden brown around edges. (Watch very carefully to prevent overbrowning.) When slices are done baking, place them in the cups of a 12-cup muffin pan, gently shaping petals so they curve upward. Let flowers dry, uncovered, at room temperature 8 hours or overnight.

A MEMBER OF THE COCA-COLA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
ANTONIS ACHILLEOS

FOOD STYLING BY
EMILY NABORS HALL

PROP STYLING BY
KATHLEEN VARNER

RECIPES BY **PAM LOLLEY**

JUST ADD FIZZ

Southern bakers know that soft drinks have long been the key to some of our most beloved cake recipes. Author Toni Tipton-Martin delves into the history behind this sweet tradition

WARM IT UP

For an extra-moist cake, make sure the cola is hot when you add it to the batter.

COCA-COLA LAYER CAKE

Recipe, page 63

Coca-Cola cake was a favorite at family reunions during the 1950s. It resembles Mississippi mud cake, a chocolate sheet cake studded with marshmallows that are sprinkled on the top before baking or immediately after while the cake is still hot. In *Mama's Tea Cakes: 101 Delicious Soul Food Desserts,* chef and author Wilbert Jones stirred the marshmallows into the batter before putting his version of the cake in the oven. If that wasn't decadent enough, in 1997, the Cracker Barrel restaurant chain used twice the cocoa, intensifying the taste. Their rendition was called Double Chocolate Fudge Coca-Cola Cake.

With the exception of 7UP and RC Cola cakes, few recipes for baking with soft drinks were part of my childhood in Southern California. I wondered why, and after examining more than 375 Black-authored cookbooks for my book, *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks,* I now know that cakes made with bubbly soft drinks are totems of Southern cooking. They rely, for the most part, on beverages invented and manufactured in this region: Coca-Cola (Georgia), Dr Pepper (Texas), 7UP (Missouri), Nehi (Georgia), and Cheerwine (North Carolina). Most African American cookbooks that came into print during the soft drink industry's heyday did so in the North and West.

Baking from scratch wasn't always the "piece of cake" it is today. Before the advent of baking powder, it was a nuanced and temperamental art. Victorian cooks leavened cakes with a variety of agents—pearl ash, made of hardwood ashes; saleratus, which predated baking soda; large quantities of beaten eggs; or a chemist's formula for baking powder (mixing baking soda and cream of tartar). All of that required knowledge, thoughtful measuring and combining, and astute observation skills—not to mention strong muscles. Room temperature butter had to be "rubbed to a cream" in an "earthen" bowl, and the remaining batter ingredients beaten until soft and creamy using a wooden cake spoon with slits, a silver spoon, or a wooden paddle.

Baking with carbonated beverages offered several handy shortcuts. Whether invented by home cooks in response to wartime sugar rationing, fierce marketing by manufacturers, or abstinence from alcohol, adding soft drinks to desserts intensifies sweetness and creates airiness without chemical leavening—a labor-saving measure.

Mid-20th-century food manufacturers capitalized upon this history, selling effort-saving ingredients, such as cake mix, condensed milk, marshmallows, wafer cookies, and soft drinks to housewives. Companies distributed "back of the box" recipes, booklets, and brochures and pushed stories in women's magazines that replaced cooking liquids in familiar dishes with effervescent beverages. Sometimes the substitution—as in cola barbecue sauce—was obvious. In other cases, like baked goods, it was less so.

When I was food editor at *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, Ohio, I purchased a divine slice of pound cake at a church bake sale and saved a small piece to share with my husband, Bruce. When I got home, the napkin cradling the cake was saturated with sweet butter. He begged me to find the woman who had baked that incredibly moist treat. I couldn't, so instead, I spent the next several years trying to duplicate its pudding-like center and crisp crust. To ease my frustration, a cousin offered up her instructions for classic 7UP cake, which came very close. Eventually, I remembered a pound cake recipe my grandmother had scribbled years earlier on one of those little sample cards that department store clerks spray with perfume. I combined the two recipes, and today, that 7UP cake keeps my husband whooping and hollering like a spirit-filled preacher.

Time-Saver
Skip the frosting, and cover the cake with sweetened whipped cream.

NEHI ORANGE POKE CAKE

Recipe, page 62

Orange flavor turns up often in African American cookbooks, whether the cook enlivens biscuits with a bit of sweet citrus juice or uses it to make pecan pie extra special. Mildred “Mama Dip” Council included two recipes for orange-flavored cake in *Mama Dip’s Family Cookbook,* her collection of recipes and reminiscences. One is a rich butter cake laced with fresh juice and grated zest. The other relies on an orange cake mix that’s “doctored up” with Mountain Dew. The poke cake featured here, inspired by the latter, is filled with a tangy citrus curd made with Nehi orange-flavored soda.

DR PEPPER TEXAS SHEET CAKE

Recipe, page 62

Chocolate sheet cakes were popular among early 20th-century cooks from Kentucky to California. Dr Pepper cake takes its cues from those recipes. Fragrant with spices like ground cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg and topped with a chocolate frosting that's speckled with pecans, it may remind some of Texas sheet cake. For nearly 20 years, I baked a version of this sweet treat to celebrate the birthday of a friend and neighbor from Wichita Falls, Texas, who was haunted (in a good way) by her childhood memories of the delicious dessert.

Give It a Swirl

Combine two frosting colors in one piping bag for a fancy look.

CHEERWINE CHERRY CUPCAKES

Recipe, page 63

Cheerwine is a cherry-flavored soda invented in North Carolina in 1917. Whether you combine the bubbly drink with a recipe for homemade white cake or pound cake or a packaged cake mix, the result is a pale pink crumb that tastes of almond extract and mild cherry. This regional drink is so popular that the Apple Baking Company of Salisbury, North Carolina (known for its packaged pound cake slices and "Ugly" glazed pastries), experimented with a cake flavored with Cheerwine syrup and soda, which it sold in 2009. The following year, doughnuts filled with Cheerwine-flavored cream debuted at Krispy Kreme in North Carolina.

7UP BUNDT CAKE

Baked goods made with soft drinks can be traced back to the 1930s and 1940s, according to food expert Lynne Olver. On her website, Food Timeline, she cited early recipes like Ginger Ale Icebox Cake and Raisin Cake Made With Pepsi-Cola. Soda has popped up in all sorts of recipes, with 7UP cake being one of the most famous. The effervescence of 7UP produces a lighter crumb in pound cakes made from scratch and gives packaged cake mix a mild lemon flavor. Some may disagree, but I'm one of those purists who reject suggestions to substitute any other brand of lemon-lime soda.

7UP Bundt Cake

ACTIVE 45 MIN. - TOTAL 4 HOURS

SERVES 12

	Vegetable shortening, for greasing pan
3	**cups all-purpose flour, plus more for pan**
1½	**cups butter, softened**
2½	**cups granulated sugar**
5	**large eggs**
1	**Tbsp. lemon zest plus 1 Tbsp. fresh juice (from 2 lemons)**
1	**Tbsp. lime zest (from 3 limes)**
1	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1	**cup lemon-lime soft drink (such as 7UP)**
	Lemon-Lime Cream Cheese Frosting (recipe follows)
	Sugared Lemon-Lime Zest (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 14- to 16-cup Bundt pan. Beat butter in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes. Gradually add sugar, beating on medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until just blended after each addition. Add lemon zest, lemon juice, lime zest, and vanilla; beat on low speed until just blended, about 30 seconds. Add flour to butter mixture alternately with soft drink, beginning and ending with flour, beating until just blended after each addition.

2. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center of cake comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes, loosely tenting pan with aluminum foil after about 45 minutes to prevent excessive browning.

3. Cool cake in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pan. Transfer to wire rack, and let cool completely, 2 hours.

4. Spoon Lemon-Lime Cream Cheese Frosting into a piping bag or heavy-duty ziplock plastic bag. Cut a 1-inch hole in corner of bag, and pipe frosting in a roped pattern over top and sides of cake. Top cake with Sugared Lemon-Lime Zest.

LEMON-LIME CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

ACTIVE 10 MIN. - TOTAL 10 MIN.

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

Beat 6 oz. softened cream cheese and 6 Tbsp. softened butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Gradually add 3 cups sifted powdered sugar, beating on low speed until combined, 1 minute. Add 1½ tsp. fresh lime juice (from 1 lime), 1 tsp. lemon zest, and 1½ tsp. fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon), beating until combined, about 30 seconds.

SUGARED LEMON-LIME ZEST

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

Bring ½ cup lemon-lime soft drink (such as 7UP) and ¼ cup granulated sugar to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high. Boil, undisturbed, until reduced by half, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from heat; cool completely, about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, zest 2 large lemons and 2 large limes using a channel knife (or citrus zester if larger pieces are desired); reserve fruit for another use. Dip zest into cooled soft drink syrup using a small fine-mesh strainer, letting excess syrup drain from zest. Place 1½ cups sanding sugar in a bowl; toss dipped zest into sanding sugar (a few at a time). Transfer sugared zest to parchment paper in a single layer. Let stand until dry, about 30 minutes.

Dr Pepper Texas Sheet Cake

ACTIVE 20 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 5 MIN.

SERVES 16

SHEET CAKE

1½	cups spicy, fruity cola soft drink (such as Dr Pepper)
1	cup butter
½	cup unsweetened cocoa
2	cups all-purpose flour
2	cups granulated sugar
1½	tsp. baking soda
1	tsp. ground cinnamon
½	tsp. salt
2	large eggs, lightly beaten
½	cup whole buttermilk
2	tsp. vanilla extract

RICH FUDGE ICING

½	cup butter
¼	cup unsweetened cocoa
¼	cup spicy, fruity cola soft drink (such as Dr Pepper)
2	Tbsp. whole milk
4	cups powdered sugar, sifted
1	tsp. vanilla extract

ADDITIONAL INGREDIENT

1½	cups coarsely chopped toasted pecans

1. Prepare the Sheet Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 17½- x 12½-inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Bring cola, butter, and unsweetened cocoa to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high, stirring often. Remove from heat.

2. Whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in a large bowl. Add cola mixture; whisk until blended. Whisk in eggs, buttermilk, and vanilla. Pour batter into prepared baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center of cake comes out clean, 16 to 20 minutes. Remove from oven.

3. Prepare the Rich Fudge Icing: Cook butter and cocoa in a medium saucepan over medium-low, whisking often, until butter melts and mixture is smooth, about 1 minute. Reduce heat to low; whisk in cola and milk until blended. Gradually add powdered sugar, whisking constantly until blended. Whisk in vanilla.

4. Pour warm icing over warm cake; gently spread in an even layer. Sprinkle with pecans. Cool completely in baking sheet on a wire rack, about 1 hour.

Nehi Orange Poke Cake

ACTIVE 40 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 30 MIN.

SERVES 16

SHEET CAKE

	Vegetable shortening, for greasing pan
	All-purpose flour, for pan
2	large eggs
1	(15¼-oz.) pkg. white cake mix
1	(8-oz.) container sour cream
¼	cup salted butter, melted
1	tsp. vanilla extract

NEHI ORANGE CURD

1¾	cups granulated sugar
½	cup butter, softened
4	large eggs
2	large egg yolks
¾	cup orange soft drink (such as Nehi)
¼	cup fresh lemon juice (from 2 lemons)
1	Tbsp. orange zest (from 1 orange)
3-4	drops orange food coloring gel

MASCARPONE-WHIPPED CREAM FROSTING

1	(8-oz.) container mascarpone cheese
½	cup unsifted powdered sugar
2	tsp. vanilla extract
2	cups heavy cream, divided
	Garnish: orange slices

1. Prepare the Sheet Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 9- x 13-inch baking pan. Beat eggs, cake mix, sour cream, melted butter, and vanilla extract with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on low speed until dry ingredients are just moistened, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium. Beat until batter is smooth, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape down bottom and sides of bowl as needed. Spoon batter into prepared pan; spread into an even layer. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 20 to 22 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, prepare the Nehi Orange Curd: Beat sugar and butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until blended, about 1 minute. Add eggs and egg yolks, 1 at a time, beating until just blended after each addition. Gradually add soft drink and lemon juice to butter mixture, beating on low speed until just blended; stir in orange zest. (Mixture will look curdled.) Transfer mixture to a heavy 4-quart saucepan. Cook over medium-low, whisking constantly, until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, 14 to 16 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in food coloring gel. (Use while mixture is still hot or very warm.)

3. Using a wooden dowel or round handle of a wooden spoon, poke holes over entire cake surface (spaced 1 to 2 inches apart), being careful not to poke all the way to the bottom. Pour warm curd mixture over cake, being sure to fill all holes and smoothing excess curd mixture evenly over surface. Let stand 30 minutes. Transfer to refrigerator; chill until completely cool, about 1 hour.

4. Prepare the Mascarpone-Whipped Cream Frosting: Whisk together mascarpone cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla, and ¼ cup of the heavy cream in a large bowl until just blended. (Don't overmix.) Beat remaining 1¾ cups heavy cream with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form, about 1 minute. Gently fold whipped cream into mascarpone mixture.

5. Spread frosting evenly over chilled cake; chill until ready to serve. Garnish with orange slices just before serving.

Coca-Cola Layer Cake with Fudgy Cola Frosting

ACTIVE 35 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 10 MIN.

SERVES 12

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for pans
1½ cups (9 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup packed light brown sugar
½ cup butter, softened
3 large eggs
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
1 (8-oz.) container sour cream
1 cup cola soft drink (such as Coca-Cola)
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Fudgy Cola Frosting (recipe follows)
Assorted sizes of white sugar pearls

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 2 (9-inch) round baking pans with cooking spray; dust with flour. Microwave chocolate chips in a microwavable bowl on MEDIUM (50%) until melted and smooth, about 2 minutes, stopping to stir every 30 seconds.

2. Beat granulated sugar, brown sugar, and butter with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until well blended, about 4 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until just blended after each addition. Add melted chocolate, beating until just blended.

3. Sift together flour, baking soda, and salt in a bowl; gradually add to butter mixture alternately with sour cream, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating on low speed until just blended after each addition.

4. Place cola in a microwavable cup; microwave on HIGH until hot, about 45 seconds. Gradually add cola to flour-butter mixture in a slow, steady stream, beating on low speed until just blended. Beat in vanilla. Pour batter evenly into prepared pans.

5. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center of cakes comes out clean, 33 to 36 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove cakes from pans. Transfer to wire racks, and cool completely, about 1 hour.

6. Spread Fudgy Cola Frosting between cake layers and on top and sides of cake. Garnish with sugar pearls as desired.

FUDGY COLA FROSTING

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 15 MIN.

MAKES ABOUT 3½ CUPS

Beat 1 cup softened butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes. Sift together 6 cups powdered sugar, ⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa, and ¼ tsp. salt in a bowl. Stir together 1 tsp. vanilla extract and 5 tablespoons cola soft drink (such as Coca-Cola), as needed in a small bowl. Add the powdered sugar mixture to butter alternately with vanilla mixture, beginning and ending with powdered sugar mixture, beating on low speed until just blended after each addition. Beat in 1 additional tablespoon cola, 1 teaspoon at a time, if needed, until desired consistency is reached.

Cheerwine Cherry Cupcakes with Cherry-Swirl Frosting

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 15 MIN.

MAKES 24

1 (15¼-oz.) pkg. white cake mix
½ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup granulated sugar
1 Tbsp. cherry-flavored gelatin (from 1 [3-oz.] envelope)
4 large eggs
¾ cup liquid coconut oil (such as LouAna)
½ cup cherry soft drink (such as Cheerwine)
½ cup finely chopped stemmed maraschino cherries, patted dry
Cherry-Swirl Frosting (recipe follows)
Pink food coloring gel
Maraschino cherries, stems removed

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 (12-cup) muffin pans with paper baking cups; coat with cooking spray. Whisk together cake mix, flour, sugar, and gelatin in a bowl; transfer mixture to bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. Add eggs, coconut oil, and soft drink; beat on low speed for 1 minute. Stop to scrape down sides. Beat on medium speed an additional 2 minutes, stopping to scrape down sides as needed. Stir in chopped maraschino cherries by hand until fully incorporated. Spoon batter evenly into prepared baking cups, filling each cup about two-thirds full.

2. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center of cupcakes comes out clean, 22 to 25 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans. Transfer to wire racks, and cool completely, about 1 hour.

3. Divide Cherry-Swirl Frosting evenly between 2 bowls. Stir 1 to 2 drops food coloring gel into 1 frosting bowl until incorporated. Fit a large pastry bag with a large star tip (Wilton #2110). Spoon pink-tinted frosting into half of bag; spoon untinted frosting into remaining half of bag. Pipe frosting onto cupcakes, and top each with 1 maraschino cherry.

CHERRY-SWIRL FROSTING

ACTIVE 10 MIN. - TOTAL 10 MIN.

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

Beat 1 cup softened butter with a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes. Gradually add 6 cups sifted powdered sugar, 3 Tbsp. cherry soft drink (such as Cheerwine), and ¼ tsp. salt, beating until blended, about 3 minutes. Beat in 1 to 3 tsp. whole milk, ½ teaspoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached.

TRUE BLUE

For Test Kitchen Professional Pam Lolley, blueberries are full of sweet memories

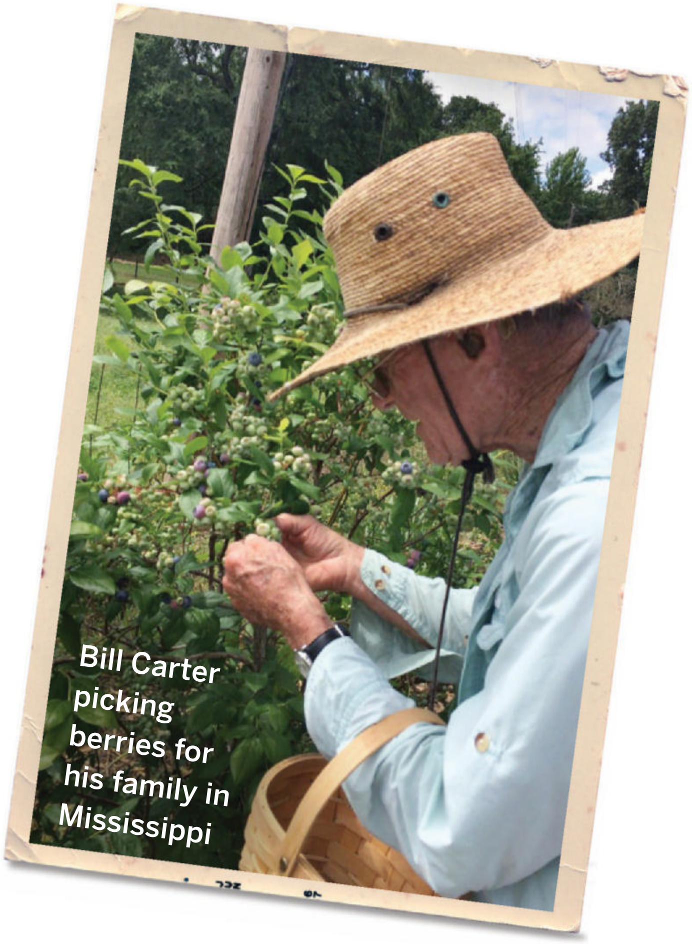
TEXT BY **LISA CERICOLA**
RECIPES BY **PAM LOLLEY**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **EMILY NABORS HALL**
PROP STYLING BY **AUDREY DAVIS**

BLUEBERRY-LEMON LAYER CAKE

Recipe, page 70

The fruit's sweet, floral flavor pairs well with tart and tangy lemons and buttermilk—both of which star in these tender cake layers. Pureed berries give the frosting its naturally beautiful hue. You'll have about ¼ cup of puree left over; stir it into smoothies or yogurt.

Blueberries hold a special place in Pam Lolley's heart. In the late 1990s, her father, Bill Carter, planted multiple varieties of blueberry bushes along a fence running from his North Mississippi home all the way down to the road. "They would ripen at different times, so he would have fruit starting in May all the way to July," she says. As each bush came into season, Bill would carefully pick the berries, and her mother, Shirley, would freeze them flat on sheet pans and then divide them into ziplock bags to share with Pam and her three siblings. They were much juicier and more flavorful than any kind found at the grocery store, and Pam would ration them out for making family favorites like muffins and her famous buttermilk pancakes. "I would time it just right so they lasted a year until I got the next batch," she says. Her stash in the freezer became all the more precious after her father passed away in 2017. "He would always give me more than the other kids because he knew how much I loved those berries and that I would actually bake with them and use them up," she says. The gorgeous treats shown here—all recipes created by Pam—celebrate the indigo gems of summer and pay tribute to a special man.


Bill Carter picking berries for his family in Mississippi

Blueberry Chiffon Mini Pies

ACTIVE 20 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 10 MIN., PLUS 4 HOURS CHILLING

MAKES 6

1	**(14.1-oz.) pkg. refrigerated piecrusts**
	All-purpose flour, for work surface
2	**cups fresh blueberries (from 2 [6-oz.)] containers)**
1	**Tbsp. fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)**
1	**(¼-oz.) envelope unflavored gelatin**
1	**(8-oz.) container mascarpone cheese**
½	**cup plus 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar, divided**
2	**cups heavy whipping cream, divided**
1½	**tsp. vanilla extract, divided**
	Fresh blueberries, for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Unroll 1 piecrust on a lightly floured surface; roll into a 12-inch circle. Using a 6-inch round cutter, cut out 2 circles. Reroll scraps once; cut out 1 more 6-inch circle. Repeat procedure with remaining piecrust for a total of 6 mini dough circles. Fit each circle into a 5-inch round miniature pie pan; fold edges under, and crimp. Prick bottoms and sides with a fork. Chill 15 minutes.

2. Place pie pans on a large baking sheet. Line each crust with a small square of parchment paper, and fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake in preheated oven until crust is set and edges are lightly browned, 12 to 15 minutes. Carefully remove weights and parchment, and continue baking until crusts are golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer pie pans to wire racks, and let cool completely, about 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, process blueberries and lemon juice in a blender or food processor until completely smooth, about 1 to 2 minutes. Combine blueberry mixture and gelatin in a small saucepan over medium-low. Cook, stirring constantly, until gelatin has completely dissolved, about 4 minutes. Transfer mixture to a large bowl, and let stand until room temperature, about 30 minutes. Gently stir mascarpone cheese and ¼ cup of the sugar into blueberry mixture until well combined.

4. Beat 1½ cups of the heavy cream and 1 teaspoon of the vanilla with a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on medium speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high, and gradually add ¼ cup of the sugar, beating until stiff peaks form, about 1 minute. Gradually fold whipped cream into blueberry mixture. Spoon mixture evenly into prepared piecrusts (about ¾ cup per pie). Cover and chill at least 4 hours or overnight (about 8 hours).

5. Beat remaining ½ cup heavy cream and ½ teaspoon vanilla with a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on medium speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high, and gradually add remaining 1 tablespoon sugar, beating until stiff peaks form, about 1 minute. Dollop or pipe whipped cream on top of pies. Garnish with blueberries, if desired.

BLUEBERRY CHIFFON MINI PIES

The mascarpone cheese-and-whipped cream combo makes this filling smooth and rich. Although it takes a bit of work to create these adorable treats, Pam says each step is very easy—the recipe even calls for store-bought pie dough!

BLUEBERRY-HONEY UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

This not-too-sweet cake gets its lovely texture and subtle toasty flavor from cornmeal, which contrasts with the layer of baked fruit. Any type of honey will work well in the recipe, but we prefer locally sourced varieties. For the finishing touch, serve it with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or a dollop of whipped cream.

Blueberry-Honey Upside-Down Cake

ACTIVE 20 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 50 MIN.

SERVES 12

¾	**cup plus 2 Tbsp. butter, softened, divided**
½	**cup honey**
2	**cups fresh blueberries (from 2 [6-oz.] containers)**
⅔	**cup granulated sugar**
⅔	**cup packed light brown sugar**
¼	**tsp. almond extract**
1½	**tsp. vanilla extract, divided**
1¾	**cups all-purpose flour**
¼	**cup fine plain yellow cornmeal**
1	**tsp. baking powder**
1	**tsp. kosher salt**
½	**tsp. baking soda**
¾	**cup whole buttermilk**
3	**large eggs**
1	**cup heavy whipping cream**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch square baking pan (at least 2 inches deep) with 2 tablespoons of the butter. Pour honey into pan, tilting to spread evenly. Top evenly with blueberries.

2. Beat granulated sugar, brown sugar, and remaining ¾ cup butter with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle on medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes. Beat in almond extract and 1 teaspoon of the vanilla.

3. Whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, kosher salt, and baking soda in a medium bowl. Whisk together buttermilk and eggs in a small bowl.

4. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with the flour mixture, beating on medium-low speed until just blended after each addition. Spoon batter on top of blueberries; spread in an even layer with a small offset spatula.

5. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes, shielding with Reynolds Kitchens® aluminum foil after 40 minutes to prevent excessive browning, if necessary. Cool in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes. Gently run a sharp knife around edges of pan, and invert cake onto a serving platter. Cool at least 30 minutes before serving.

6. Beat heavy cream and remaining ½ teaspoon vanilla with a stand mixer fitted with whisk on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes. Top cake with whipped cream or ice cream.

BLUEBERRY-GINGER CRUMB CAKE

Chopped crystallized ginger gives this cake a slightly spicy note that pairs wonderfully with a cup of coffee. To keep the berries from sinking to the bottom of the pan, Pam tosses them with a little flour before folding them into the batter.

Blueberry-Ginger Crumb Cake

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 45 MIN.

SERVES 8

CRUMB TOPPING

1	**cup all-purpose flour**
⅔	**cup granulated sugar**
¼	**tsp. kosher salt**
½	**cup cold butter, cubed**

CAKE

½	**cup chopped crystallized ginger**
1½	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. kosher salt**
½	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
¼	**tsp. baking soda**
2	**cups plus ½ Tbsp. all-purpose flour, divided, plus more for skillet**
¾	**cup butter, softened**
½	**cup granulated sugar**
½	**cup packed light brown sugar**
2	**large eggs**
1½	**tsp. vanilla extract**
½	**cup sour cream**
1	**cup fresh blueberries (from 1 [6-oz.] container)**
	Vegetable shortening, for greasing pan

1. Prepare the Crumb Topping: Stir together flour, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl; cut cold butter into flour mixture with a pastry blender or fork until crumbly. Cover and chill until ready to use.

2. Prepare the Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine crystallized ginger, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, baking soda, and 2 cups of the flour in a food processor; process until ginger is very finely chopped and mixture is well combined, about 2 minutes.

3. Beat butter with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, 1 minute. Gradually add granulated and brown sugars; beat until light and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until just combined after each addition. Beat in vanilla, 10 seconds. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with sour cream, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating until just combined after each addition.

4. Toss together blueberries and remaining ½ tablespoon flour in a bowl. Gently fold floured blueberries into batter. Spoon into a greased (with shortening) and floured 10-inch cast-iron skillet or ovenproof skillet (at least 2 inches deep). Smooth batter into an even layer using an offset spatula. Sprinkle evenly with Crumb Topping.

5. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 50 to 55 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack. Cool 30 minutes to serve warm, or cool completely, about 1 hour.

Blueberry-Lemon Layer Cake

ACTIVE 40 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 10 MIN., PLUS 1 HOUR COOLING

SERVES 12

CAKE LAYERS

	Vegetable shortening, for greasing pans
1	**cup butter, softened**
2	**cups granulated sugar**
4	**large eggs**
2	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. kosher salt**
½	**tsp. baking soda**
3	**cups plus 1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour, divided, plus more for pans**
1¼	**cups whole buttermilk**
1	**Tbsp. grated lemon zest plus ¼ cup fresh juice (from 2 medium lemons)**
2	**tsp. vanilla extract**
1½	**cups fresh blueberries (from 2 [6-oz.] containers)**

FROSTING

1	**cup fresh blueberries (from 1 [6-oz.] container), plus more for garnish**
1	**Tbsp. grated lemon zest, plus 3 Tbsp. fresh juice, divided (from 2 lemons)**
1	**cup butter, softened**
1	**(32-oz.) pkg. powdered sugar**

1. Prepare the Cake Layers: Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease (with shortening) and flour 3 (8-inch) round cake pans, and set aside. Beat butter with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute. Gradually add sugar, beating until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition.

2. Whisk together baking powder, salt, baking soda, and 3 cups of the flour in a medium bowl until well blended. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating until blended after each addition. Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice, and vanilla. Toss together blueberries and remaining 1 tablespoon flour in a small bowl; gently fold floured blueberries into batter. Spoon batter into prepared pans.

3. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 23 to 25 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes; remove from pans to wire racks. Cool completely, about 1 hour.

4. Meanwhile, prepare the Frosting: Process blueberries and lemon juice in a blender or food processor until completely smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. Beat butter and lemon zest with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add powdered sugar alternately with blueberry mixture, beating until blended after each addition. Increase speed to medium; beat until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. If desired, reserve 1 cup Frosting; place in a piping bag fitted with a star tip.

5. Place 1 Cake Layer on a platter or cake stand. Spread 1 cup Frosting over top. Add a second Cake Layer; spread top with 1 cup Frosting. Top with third layer; frost top and sides of cake with remaining Frosting. If desired, pipe reserved Frosting around outer edge of cake. Garnish with blueberries.

Blueberry-Lavender Hand Pies

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 15 MIN., PLUS 4 HOURS CHILLING

MAKES 12

DOUGH

2½	**cups all-purpose flour, plus more for work surface**
2	**Tbsp. granulated sugar**
1	**tsp. kosher salt**
¾	**cup cold butter, cubed**
4	**Tbsp. cold vegetable shortening, cubed**
½	**cup ice-cold water**

FILLING

¼	**tsp. dried culinary lavender**
4	**Tbsp. granulated sugar**
1	**Tbsp. cornstarch**
⅛	**tsp. kosher salt**
1	**cup fresh blueberries (from 1 [6-oz.] container)**
1	**tsp. vanilla extract**

GLAZE

1	**cup powdered sugar**
4	**tsp. whole milk**
¼	**tsp. vanilla extract**

1. Prepare the Dough: Place flour, sugar, and salt in bowl of a food processor; pulse until combined, about 3 pulses. Scatter butter and shortening over top of flour mixture; pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs, 7 to 8 pulses. Add ice water; pulse until mixture starts to clump together, about 8 pulses. Scrape mixture out onto a lightly floured surface; knead just until it comes together, 2 or 3 times. Divide Dough in half; shape each half into a flat disk. Cover each disk in plastic wrap, and chill 4 hours.

2. Prepare the Filling: Process lavender and 2 tablespoons of the sugar in a spice grinder or food processor until finely ground. Whisk together lavender mixture, cornstarch, salt, and remaining 2 tablespoons sugar in a small saucepan. Whisk in ¼ cup water, and bring to a boil over medium-high, whisking often. Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 30 seconds. Remove from heat, and stir in blueberries and vanilla, lightly crushing half of the berries. Let stand until completely cool, about 30 minutes.

3. Preheat oven to 400°F with oven rack in upper third of oven. Roll 1 chilled Dough disk to ⅛-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface; using a 5-inch round cutter, cut out 4 or 5 circles. Repeat procedure with remaining disk. Reroll scraps; cut out 2 or 3 more circles until you have 12 circles total. Spoon 1 tablespoon Filling in center of each circle. Moisten edges halfway around each circle with water. Fold circles in half over Filling; crimp edges with a fork to seal. Cut 2 to 3 (½-inch) slits on top of each pie. Place pies on a parchment paper-lined large rimmed baking sheet.

4. Bake in preheated oven until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer baking sheet to a wire rack, and cool 30 minutes.

5. While pies cool, prepare the Glaze: Whisk together powdered sugar, milk, and vanilla until smooth. Drizzle Glaze over slightly warm pies. Serve warm, or let cool completely, about 30 minutes.

BLUEBERRY-LAVENDER HAND PIES

These crisp, flaky pastries are filled with a chunky berry compote flavored with just a hint of lavender. When buying the herb, make sure that it's labeled "culinary," not just dried. You can find it at Whole Foods Market, at Trader Joe's, or on Amazon.

RAISING THE BAR

Seven sweet ideas—from pecan pie bars to chocolate brownies—that are easy to make and fun to share

When cookies seem too casual and layer cakes feel too fancy, dessert bars stand in the gap, delivering surprising flavors in portable packaging. For generations of bakers, these handheld treats have been the go-to choice for bridal showers, birthday parties, potlucks, or any other celebratory gatherings. Why do we love them? Let us count the ways: They can be made ahead of time, baked and served out of one pan, and transported with ease. Plus, they're great for feeding a crowd. In the July 1966 issue of *Southern Living*, we published our first bar recipe, Seven-Layer Cookies, which called for graham cracker crumbs, pecans, flaked coconut, and chocolate and butterscotch chips. Fifty-seven years later, our Test Kitchen is still dreaming up tasty new creations, sharing smart grocery store substitutions, and developing time-saving shortcuts that make baking sweeter than ever.

TEXT BY **PATRICIA S. YORK** | RECIPES BY **ANNA THEOKTISTO**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **CHELSEA ZIMMER** | PROP STYLING BY **CHRISTINE KEELY**

PEANUT BUTTER-FUDGE BARS

Recipe, page 80

Allow enough time for the top layer of melted chocolate to firm up before slicing these triple-decker bars. Leftovers can be covered and stored in the refrigerator up to three days.

BROWN BUTTER-CARAMEL BLONDIES

Recipe, page 79

Short on time? Say no more. Just substitute a jarred salted-caramel sauce for the homemade version. For a sweet touch, top the blondies with extra caramel; microwave it for 15 seconds to make it easier to pour.

RASPBERRY-ALMOND CRUMBLE BARS

Recipe, page 80

To give these bars an extra-thick layer of fruit, we added berries to the mixture. For the neatest squares, cool them completely before cutting—or refrigerate up to two hours.

SPICED PECAN PIE BARS

Recipe, page 80

Two pantry staples—ground cinnamon and ginger—give the traditional pecan pie filling an unexpected and flavorful twist. For an impressive dessert, serve each bar on a plate with a scoop of ice cream and a drizzle of caramel sauce.

CAPPUCCINO SWIRL BARS

Recipe, page 79

Don't be fooled—these look fancy, but store-bought wafer cookies are the secret to the chocolate crust. Make these coffee-flavored beauties in advance, and refrigerate up to three days.

ULTIMATE DARK CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

Bourbon and espresso make these rich, fudgy brownies even more decadent. For a kid friendly (but still delicious) option, simply skip those two ingredients.

Ultimate Dark Chocolate Brownies

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS

MAKES 32

Baking spray with flour
3 (4-oz.) bittersweet chocolate bars (such as Ghirardelli), chopped (about 2 cups)
1 cup unsalted butter
4 large eggs
¾ cup granulated sugar
¾ cup packed light brown sugar
3 Tbsp. (1½ oz.) bourbon
2 Tbsp. instant espresso granules
1½ cups all-purpose flour
½ tsp. kosher salt
3 (4-oz.) semisweet chocolate bars, chopped (about 2 cups), divided
1 tsp. flaky sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour. Bring a medium pot with 1 inch of water to a simmer over low. Set a medium-size heatproof glass bowl over pot. Add chopped bittersweet chocolate and butter to bowl; cook, stirring occasionally, until melted, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat; cool slightly, about 10 minutes.

2. Whisk eggs, granulated sugar, brown sugar, bourbon, and espresso granules into cooled chocolate-butter mixture until well combined. Stir in flour and kosher salt until combined. Pour half of the batter into prepared pan. Sprinkle with 1 cup of the chopped semisweet chocolate. Top with remaining batter, smoothing with an offset spatula. Sprinkle with remaining 1 cup chopped semisweet chocolate.

3. Bake in preheated oven until center is set, about 25 minutes. Remove from oven; sprinkle with flaky sea salt. Cool completely in pan, about 1 hour. Slice into 32 bars.

Brown Butter-Caramel Blondies

ACTIVE 40 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 50 MIN.

MAKES 32

CARAMEL
1½ cups granulated sugar
¼ cup light corn syrup
¼ cup water
½ cup heavy cream
3 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
¼ tsp. salt

BLONDIES
Baking spray with flour
1½ cups unsalted butter
4 large eggs
2½ cups packed light brown sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
3½ cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
¾ cup chopped walnuts, divided
1 (4-oz.) semisweet chocolate bar, chopped, divided

1. Prepare the Caramel: Bring granulated sugar, corn syrup, and water to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high. Boil, undisturbed, until mixture turns amber in color, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat; carefully stir in cream, butter, and salt until smooth. Cool until slightly thickened, about 30 minutes.

2. Prepare the Blondies: Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium, swirling occasionally, until butter browns and has a nutty aroma, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl; cool slightly, about 30 minutes. Whisk eggs, brown sugar, and vanilla into brown butter until shiny, about 30 seconds. Stir together flour, baking powder, and salt in a separate bowl until combined. Gradually add flour mixture, ½ cup of the walnuts, and 2 ounces of the chocolate to brown butter-egg mixture, stirring until combined. Spoon half of the batter into prepared pan. Bake 10 minutes.

3. Remove pan from oven; drizzle with 1 cup cooled Caramel. Spoon remaining batter over top. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup walnuts and 2 ounces chocolate. Return to oven; bake at 350°F until mixture is golden and set, about 25 minutes. Cool completely in pan, about 1 hour. Slice into 32 bars. Drizzle with remaining Caramel just before serving.

Cappuccino Swirl Bars

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 45 MIN., PLUS 4 HOURS CHILLING

MAKES 32

CRUST
Baking spray with flour
3 cups chocolate wafer cookie crumbs (from 2 [9-oz.] pkg. chocolate wafer cookies, such as Nabisco Famous)
½ cup butter, melted
⅓ cup granulated sugar
1 Tbsp. instant espresso granules
1 large egg white, lightly beaten

FILLING
3 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
1⅓ cups granulated sugar
1 cup heavy cream, divided
2 Tbsp. instant espresso granules
1 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa

GARNISH
Chocolate-covered espresso beans, chopped

1. Prepare the Crust: Preheat oven to 325°F. Coat a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour. Stir cookie crumbs, melted butter, sugar, espresso granules, and egg white in a large bowl until combined. Firmly press mixture into bottom of prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven until Crust is set, about 14 minutes. Cool completely.

2. Prepare the Filling: Beat cream cheese and sugar in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium-high speed until smooth and creamy, about 3 minutes. Reduce speed to low; beat in ¾ cup of the heavy cream. Increase speed to high; beat until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Transfer 2 cups of the cream cheese mixture to a medium bowl; set aside. Dollop 3 cups cream cheese mixture over Crust.

3. Place remaining ¼ cup heavy cream in a small microwavable bowl; microwave on HIGH until just warm, about 20 seconds. Stir in espresso granules and cocoa until dissolved. Place in freezer; cool 10 minutes. Beat cooled mixture into reserved cream cheese mixture in bowl on medium speed until smooth and thickened, about 1 minute. Dollop over cream cheese mixture in Crust. Using a spoon, swirl espresso-cream cheese and plain cream cheese mixtures together to edges of Crust.

4. Cover and refrigerate until very cold, at least 4 hours. Slice into 32 bars. Garnish bars with chopped chocolate-covered espresso beans.

Spiced Pecan Pie Bars

ACTIVE 10 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS

MAKES 32

CRUST
Baking spray with flour
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup cold unsalted butter, cubed
¾ cup unsifted powdered sugar
1 tsp. kosher salt

FILLING
4 large eggs
1 cup light corn syrup
⅔ cup packed light brown sugar
½ cup honey
¼ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. kosher salt
½ tsp. ground ginger
3 cups pecans, coarsely chopped

1. Prepare the Crust: Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour. Line bottom and sides of pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2- to 3-inch overhang on 2 sides. Place flour, butter, powdered sugar, and salt in a food processor. Pulse until coarse crumbs form, 6 to 7 times. Firmly press mixture into bottom of prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven until light golden brown, about 20 minutes. (Crust will have cracks.)

2. Prepare the Filling: Whisk together eggs and next 8 ingredients in a bowl until smooth. Stir in pecans. Pour over warm Crust. Bake at 350°F until Filling is set, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool completely in pan, about 1 hour. Slice into 32 bars.

Peanut Butter-Fudge Bars

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 3 HOURS

MAKES 32

Baking spray with flour
1 (18¾-oz.) pkg. brownie mix (such as Ghirardelli)
1 (10-oz.) pkg. peanut butter chips (about 1¾ cups)
1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
½ cup creamy peanut butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Pinch of salt
1½ cups semisweet chocolate chips
¾ cup heavy cream
½ cup roasted salted peanuts, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour. Prepare brownie mix according to package directions in prepared pan, baking at 350°F until a wooden pick inserted in the middle comes out clean, about 25 minutes. (Baking times may vary among brownie mixes.) Cool completely, about 1 hour.

2. Place peanut butter chips, sweetened condensed milk, peanut butter, vanilla, and salt in a medium microwavable bowl. Microwave on HIGH 1 minute. Stir until smooth. Spoon over cooled brownies, spreading in an even layer.

3. Place chocolate chips and cream in a small microwavable bowl. Microwave on HIGH until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth, about 2 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds. Pour over peanut butter mixture on brownies, spreading in an even layer. Refrigerate brownies until top chocolate layer is firm, about 1 hour. Sprinkle with peanuts. Slice into 32 bars.

Raspberry-Almond Crumble Bars

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 4 HOURS, 10 MIN.

MAKES 32

FILLING
6 cups (26 oz.) fresh or thawed frozen raspberries
¾ cup seedless raspberry jam
½ cup granulated sugar
6 Tbsp. cornstarch
1½ tsp. lemon zest (from 1 lemon)

CRUMBLE
Cooking spray
2 cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups uncooked old-fashioned regular rolled oats
1½ cups packed light brown sugar
1 cup sliced almonds
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. baking soda
1 cup butter, melted

1. Prepare the Filling: Stir together first 5 ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, stirring often, until thickened and reduced to 3½ cups, 8 to 10 minutes. Cool completely, about 1 hour.

2. Prepare the Crumble: Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line bottom and sides of pan with parchment, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides. Stir together flour, oats, brown sugar, almonds, cinnamon, and baking soda in a large bowl. Stir in melted butter until combined. Firmly press 4 cups of the Crumble mixture into bottom of prepared pan to form a crust. Bake until lightly browned around edges, 10 to 12 minutes. Cool 5 minutes.

3. Spread cooled Filling over warm crust; sprinkle with remaining Crumble. Bake at 350°F until filling is bubbly, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool completely in pan, about 2 hours. Lift bars out of pan using parchment as handles. Slice into 32 bars.

Lemon-Coconut Chess Bars

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 3 HOURS, 45 MIN.

MAKES 32

CRUST
Baking spray with flour
2½ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup unsifted powdered sugar
½ cup sweetened flaked coconut
1½ tsp. kosher salt
1 cup cold unsalted butter, cubed

FILLING
2 cups granulated sugar
2 Tbsp. plain yellow cornmeal
2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
½ tsp. kosher salt
5 large eggs
1 large egg yolk
1¼ cups well-shaken and stirred coconut milk (from 1 [13½-oz.] can)
½ cup unsalted butter, melted
1 Tbsp. lemon zest plus ½ cup fresh juice (from 3 lemons)
1 tsp. vanilla extract

GARNISH
Toasted shaved coconut

1. Prepare the Crust: Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour. Pulse next 4 ingredients in a food processor until combined, 5 to 6 times. Add cold butter; pulse until coarse crumbs form. Firmly press into bottom of prepared pan. Bake until light golden brown, about 25 minutes. Cool slightly, about 10 minutes.

2. Prepare the Filling: Whisk together first 4 ingredients in a bowl. Add next 6 ingredients; stir. Pour over Crust.

3. Bake at 350°F until set, about 25 minutes. Remove from oven; cool in pan, about 1½ hours. Chill 1 hour. Slice into 32 bars. Garnish with shaved coconut.

LEMON-COCONUT CHESS BARS

Coconut milk adds a hint of tropical flavor to these delightfully tangy bars. For the smoothest filling, whisk together the dry ingredients, and then stir in the wet ingredients until smooth. This will prevent tiny lumps of flour from forming.

CREAMY PEACH ICEBOX CAKE

Recipe, page 84

CHOCOLATE-PEANUT BUTTER ICEBOX PIE

Recipe, page 84

CHILL OUT

These cool and creamy icebox pies are everything you want in a dessert on a warm day

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS** | FOOD STYLING BY **EMILY NABORS HALL** | PROP STYLING BY **JULIA BAYLESS**

Creamy Peach Icebox Cake

ACTIVE 20 MIN. - TOTAL 20 MIN., PLUS 8 HOURS FREEZING

SERVES 8

Layers of pound cake, ice cream, and fruit hit the spot any day. For clean, neat cuts, run hot water over the knife's blade and wipe it with a moist towel every time you make a slice.

- **2 (10¾-oz.) frozen pound cakes, thawed**
- **1 (10-oz.) jar peach preserves, divided**
- **1 qt. vanilla ice cream, slightly softened**
- **1 cup heavy cream**
- **½ tsp. vanilla extract**
- **3 Tbsp. powdered sugar**
- **1 cup peeled fresh peach slices**

1. Trim brown crusts from pound cakes using a serrated knife. Discard crusts. Cut each cake into ½-inch-thick slices. (You will have 18 to 24 slices.) Line bottom and sides of a 9- x 5-inch loaf pan with plastic wrap, allowing a 4-inch overhang on sides. Place 1 tablespoon of the preserves in a microwavable bowl; chill until ready to use.

2. Arrange 6 to 8 cake slices, side by side, to cover bottom of pan in 1 layer (trimming slices, if needed, to fully cover bottom). Spread 2 cups ice cream over cake layer to edges of pan. Spread half of the remaining preserves (about ⅓ cup) evenly over ice-cream layer. Repeat process with 6 to 8 remaining cake slices (trimming if needed), and remaining ice cream and preserves. Arrange last 6 to 8 cake slices over preserves layer. Pull plastic wrap overhang up and tightly over cake. Freeze 8 hours.

3. Beat heavy cream and vanilla extract with an electric mixer on high speed until foamy, 30 seconds. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating until stiff peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Remove cake from freezer. Holding the plastic wrap overhang, lift cake from pan; invert onto a platter. (Discard plastic wrap.) Spread whipped cream over cake.

5. Melt reserved 1 tablespoon preserves on HIGH until just melted and smooth, 10 to 15 seconds; mash large lumps with a spoon. Gently stir in peach slices to coat. Spoon mixture over cake; serve immediately.

Cherries-and-Cream Icebox Cake

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 25 MIN., PLUS 8 HOURS CHILLING

SERVES 12

- **½ cup plus 1 Tbsp. cherry preserves (from 1 [13-oz.] jar, such as Bonne Maman)**
- **4 cups heavy whipping cream, divided**
- **2 tsp. vanilla extract, divided**
- **¾ tsp. almond extract, divided**
- **1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened**
- **¾ cup plus 3 Tbsp. powdered sugar, divided**
- **21 (2¼- x 5-inch) graham crackers (from 1 [14.4-oz.] pkg.)**
- **Fresh cherries, for topping**

1. Process cherry preserves in a food processor until completely smooth, 1 to 2 minutes; set aside.

2. Beat 3 cups of the cream, 1 teaspoon of the vanilla, and ½ teaspoon of the almond extract with a stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment on medium speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high, and beat until stiff peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes; set aside.

3. Beat cream cheese, ¾ cup of the powdered sugar, and 3 tablespoons of pureed cherry preserves in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth and completely combined, about 2 minutes. Gently fold one-third of whipped cream mixture into cream cheese mixture until thoroughly combined. Repeat in 2 more additions with remaining whipped cream mixture.

4. Lightly coat a 9-inch spring-form pan with cooking spray. Line bottom of pan with a layer of graham crackers, breaking them in order to cover bottom. (Don't worry about any small gaps.) Spread 2 cups whipped cream mixture over graham crackers. Dollop with 1 tablespoon pureed cherry preserves; swirl with a wooden skewer or the tip of a knife. Repeat layers 3 more times with remaining graham crackers and whipped cream mixture and 3 tablespoons of the remaining preserves, ending with whipped cream mixture and preserves. Cover; chill 8 to 24 hours.

5. Before serving, beat remaining 1 cup cream, 1 teaspoon vanilla, and ¼ teaspoon almond extract with a stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment on medium speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high, and gradually add remaining 3 tablespoons powdered sugar; beat until medium peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove cake from springform pan; spread top with whipped cream. Dollop remaining 1 tablespoon preserves onto whipped cream; swirl gently with a wooden skewer or the tip of a knife. Top with fresh cherries.

Chocolate-Peanut Butter Icebox Pie

ACTIVE 20 MIN. - TOTAL 50 MIN., PLUS 8 HOURS CHILLING

SERVES 8

- **22 peanut butter sandwich cookies (such as Nutter Butter, from 1 [16-oz.] pkg.)**
- **5 Tbsp. butter, melted**
- **2 Tbsp. cornstarch**
- **3 large egg yolks**
- **1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk**
- **1 cup whole milk**
- **2 tsp. vanilla extract**
- **¾ cup 60% cacao bittersweet chocolate chips (4½ oz.)**
- **2 cups Best-Ever Whipped Cream (recipe, page 7)**
- **Chopped chocolate-covered peanuts**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly coat a 9-inch pie pan with cooking spray. Place cookies in a food processor; process until finely ground, 45 seconds to 1 minute. Measure 2¾ cups cookie crumbs into a medium bowl; discard any remaining crumbs. Stir melted butter into crumbs in bowl until combined. Press mixture into bottom and up sides of prepared pan. Bake in oven until lightly browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack, about 20 minutes.

2. During final 10 minutes of cool time, whisk together cornstarch and egg yolks in a medium saucepan until smooth. Gradually whisk in sweetened condensed milk, whole milk, and vanilla extract until combined. Bring to a simmer over medium, whisking constantly. Continue simmering, whisking constantly, until thickened to a pudding-like consistency, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in chocolate chips until melted and smooth, about 1 minute. Pour through a fine mesh strainer into cooled crust, and discard solids. Smooth pie top. Refrigerate, uncovered, until set, at least 8 hours or up to 2 days.

3. Top pie with whipped cream dollops around edge; garnish with chopped nuts.

CHERRIES-AND-CREAM ICEBOX CAKE

SECRET TO THE SWIRL

Ribbons of pureed cherry preserves run through the layers of this dessert. Dollop the center of each whipped cream layer with 1 tablespoon preserves. Use a wooden skewer or the tip of a knife to drag and swirl the preserves outward and evenly throughout the whipped cream.

KEY LIME
ICE-CREAM PIE

Key Lime Ice-Cream Pie

SERVES 8 TO 10

To simplify, you may substitute 1 quart of store-bought ice cream (2 cups for each layer) for the homemade ice creams in the recipes on this page. Frozen yogurt or sherbet would work too.

The Crust: Process 1 (8.8-oz.) package crisp gourmet cookies (such as Lotus Biscoff) in a food processor until finely ground. Stir together crumbs and ⅓ cup melted butter. Press on bottom and up sides of a lightly greased 9-inch pie plate. Freeze 30 minutes or until crust is set.

The Filling: Spread half of 1 (10-oz.) jar lemon curd on bottom of crust, and freeze 10 minutes. Spread half of Avocado-Key Lime Pie Ice Cream (recipe, opposite) over lemon curd; freeze 15 minutes. Repeat layers with remaining lemon curd and ice cream, freezing as directed above after each layer.

The Topping: Beat 2 cups whipping cream, ¼ cup powdered sugar, and ⅛ tsp. coconut extract at medium speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form; spread over top of pie. Top with macadamia nuts, toasted coconut curls, and Key lime slices.

Strawberry-Pretzel Ice-Cream Pie

SERVES 8 TO 10

The Crust: Process 1 (9-oz.) package chocolate wafer cookies (such as Famous Chocolate Wafers) in a food processor until finely ground. Stir together cookie crumbs and ½ cup melted butter. Press mixture on bottom and up sides of a lightly greased 9-inch pie plate. Freeze 30 minutes or until crust is set.

The Filling: Spread half of 1 (11.75-oz.) jar hot fudge topping (such as Smucker's) on bottom of crust; freeze 10 minutes. Spread half of Strawberry-Pretzel Ice Cream (recipe, opposite; omit basil in ice cream, if desired) over fudge topping; freeze 15 minutes. Spread remaining fudge topping over pie, and sprinkle with ½ cup chopped pretzels; freeze 10 minutes. Spread with remaining ice cream, and freeze 15 minutes.

The Topping: Top with sweetened whipped cream, strawberry slices, pretzel sticks, and shaved chocolate.

Blueberry-Cheesecake Ice-Cream Pie

SERVES 8 TO 10

The Crust: Process 1 (10-oz.) package shortbread cookies (such as Lorna Doone) in a food processor until finely ground. Stir together shortbread crumbs and ⅓ cup melted butter. Press mixture on bottom and up sides of a lightly greased 9-inch pie plate. Freeze 30 minutes or until crust is set.

The Filling: Spread ¼ cup blueberry preserves (such as Smucker's) on bottom of crust, and freeze 10 minutes. Spread half of Blueberry-Cheesecake Ice Cream (recipe, opposite) over preserves, and freeze 15 minutes. Repeat layers once with ¼ cup preserves and remaining ice cream, freezing as directed above after each layer.

The Topping: Top with sweetened whipped cream, fresh blueberries and blackberries, and lemon twists.

BLUEBERRY-CHEESECAKE ICE-CREAM PIE
STRAWBERRY-PRETZEL ICE-CREAM PIE

Buttermilk Ice Cream

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 3 HOURS

MAKES ABOUT 1 QT.

Cream cheese and tangy buttermilk give this master recipe its creamy texture and eliminate the need to cook a traditional custard base. Stir in fresh fruit, chopped candy bars, crushed cookies, or spices.

1	**(8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened to room temperature**
1½	**cups half-and-half**
¾	**cup sugar**
½	**cup whole buttermilk**
1½	**tsp. vanilla bean paste***
⅛	**tsp. salt**

1. Process all ingredients in a blender 30 seconds or until very smooth. Cover and chill at least 2 hours or up to 2 days.

2. Pour mixture into freezer container of a 1½-quart electric ice-cream maker, and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. (The instructions and times may vary.)

3. Serve immediately, or transfer to an airtight container, and freeze up to 1 week.

*Vanilla extract may be substituted.

AVOCADO–KEY LIME PIE ICE CREAM

Prepare Buttermilk Ice Cream recipe as directed, adding 1½ medium-size ripe avocados, chopped; 1 tsp. Key lime zest; and ¼ cup fresh Key lime juice with cream cheese in Step 1. Stir ¾ cup coarsely crumbled graham crackers into prepared ice cream. Freeze 1 hour before serving.

STRAWBERRY-PRETZEL ICE CREAM

Prepare Buttermilk Ice Cream recipe as directed. Stir together 1 cup chopped fresh strawberries, ¼ cup strawberry preserves, and 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil. Stir strawberry mixture and ¾ cup crushed pretzel sticks into prepared ice cream. Freeze 1 hour before serving.

BLUEBERRY-CHEESECAKE ICE CREAM

Prepare Buttermilk Ice Cream recipe as directed, adding ¼ tsp. almond extract to cream cheese mixture in Step 1. Mash together 1 cup fresh blueberries, 3 Tbsp. blueberry preserves, and 2 tsp. lemon zest. Stir mixture into prepared ice cream. Freeze 1 hour before serving.

NEVER BETTER

It's hard to improve upon beloved classic recipes, but that didn't stop our Test Kitchen from whipping up these new creamy, dreamy takes

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTONIS ACHILLEOS**
FOOD STYLING BY **EMILY NABORS HALL** | PROP STYLING BY **JULIA BAYLESS**

ATLANTIC BEACH PIE

Recipe, page 94

McLEOD FARMS' FRESH PEACH POUND CAKE

Recipe, page 90

McLeod Farms' Fresh Peach Pound Cake

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 40 MIN.

SERVES 12

Family-owned McLeod Farms in McBee, South Carolina, has grown peaches since 1916 and even has its own cookbook.

PEACH POUND CAKE

- **1 cup unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing pan**
- **2 cups plus 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar, divided**
- **4 large eggs**
- **1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- **1 tsp. baking powder**
- **1 tsp. kosher salt**
- **3 cups all-purpose flour, divided**
- **2 cups fresh peeled peaches, cut into ¾-inch cubes (from 5 small peaches, about 1 lb., 4 oz.)**

PEACH GLAZE

- **1 Tbsp. cornstarch**
- **4 peaches (1 lb.), peeled and halved**
- **¼ cup granulated sugar**

1. Prepare the Peach Pound Cake: Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease a 10-inch tube pan with butter, and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of the sugar.

2. Beat butter and remaining 2 cups sugar with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, on medium-low speed, beating just until blended after each addition, about 1 minute. Beat in vanilla.

3. Stir together baking powder, salt, and 2¾ cups of the flour. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating just until combined, about 1 minute.

4. Combine peaches and remaining ¼ cup flour in a medium bowl, and toss until peaches are fully coated. Fold floured peaches into batter. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan.

5. Bake in preheated oven until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 60 to 70 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack 10 minutes; run an offset spatula or knife around edges of cake, and remove from pan to rack. Cool completely, about 1 hour.

6. Prepare the Peach Glaze: Stir together ¼ cup water and cornstarch in a small bowl until cornstarch is completely incorporated; set aside.

7. Add peeled peach halves to a blender, and process until smooth, about 45 seconds. Pour peach mixture into a small saucepan, and add sugar. Bring to a simmer over low. Stir in cornstarch mixture; cook, stirring often, until mixture has thickened, about 5 minutes. Drizzle Peach Glaze over cooled pound cake before serving.

Banana Pudding Pie

ACTIVE 30 MIN. - TOTAL 55 MIN.,
PLUS 2 HOURS COOLING

SERVES 8

- **Brown Butter-Vanilla Wafer Crust (recipe follows)**
- **1½ cups whole milk**
- **½ cup heavy whipping cream**
- **½ cup granulated sugar**
- **⅛ tsp. kosher salt**
- **4 large egg yolks**
- **¼ cup cornstarch**
- **2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for greasing pie plate**
- **1½ tsp. vanilla extract**
- **4 medium bananas, divided**
- **Vanilla Bean Whipped Cream (recipe follows)**
- **Crushed vanilla wafers**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Lightly grease a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate with butter, and press Brown Butter-Vanilla Wafer Crust into bottom and up sides of prepared pie plate. Bake until golden brown and firm, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from oven; let cool on a wire rack while preparing filling.

2. Whisk together milk, cream, sugar, and salt in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium, whisking often, until steaming, about 5 minutes. (Do not let milk mixture boil.) Remove from heat. Whisk together egg yolks and cornstarch in a medium heatproof bowl until smooth. Using a ladle, slowly drizzle ½ cup steaming milk mixture into egg mixture, whisking constantly until combined. Slowly drizzle egg mixture into remaining warmed milk mixture in saucepan, stirring constantly until combined. Cook milk mixture over medium, whisking constantly, until mixture thickens and begins to simmer (about 200°F), about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat; whisk in butter and vanilla. Transfer pudding to a medium bowl, and cover with plastic wrap, pressing plastic wrap directly on pudding surface to prevent a skin from forming. Let pudding stand 15 minutes.

3. Cut 3 of the bananas into ½-inch-thick slices; arrange slices in bottom of cooled crust. Top with pudding; spread into an even layer using a small offset spatula. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing plastic wrap directly on pudding surface to prevent a skin from forming, and chill until set, at least 2 hours or up to 12 hours.

4. Just before serving, remove pie from refrigerator. Cut remaining banana into ½-inch-thick slices. Pipe Vanilla Bean Whipped Cream on pie. Arrange banana slices as desired, sprinkle pie with crushed vanilla wafers, and serve.

BROWN BUTTER-VANILLA WAFER CRUST

ACTIVE 10 MIN. - TOTAL 10 MIN.

MAKES 1 CRUST FOR 9-INCH PIE

Melt 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter in a small saucepan over medium. Cook, whisking constantly, until butter reaches a deep golden brown and smells nutty, about 3 to 5 minutes. Stir together brown butter, 1½ cups finely ground vanilla wafer crumbs (from about 50 vanilla wafers), ¼ cup granulated sugar, ½ tsp. kosher salt, and ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg in a bowl. Form crust in baking pan or pie plate as directed in recipe. Cover and store in refrigerator up to 2 days, or freeze up to 2 months.

VANILLA BEAN WHIPPED CREAM

ACTIVE 5 MIN. - TOTAL 5 MIN.

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

Cut 1 vanilla bean pod in half lengthwise. Using back of a paring knife or edge of a small spoon, scrape vanilla seeds from 1 pod half into bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Reserve remaining pod half for another use. Add 1 cup heavy whipping cream, ⅛ tsp. kosher salt, and 3 Tbsp. powdered sugar to bowl. Beat on medium speed until frothy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high, and beat until stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Use immediately, or store in refrigerator until ready to use (up to 4 hours).

BANANA
PUDDING
PIE

FRESH MINT CHOCOLATE PIE

Recipe, page 94

CHOCOLATE-ZUCCHINI CAKE

Recipe, page 94

Fresh Mint Chocolate Pie

ACTIVE 25 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, 25 MIN., PLUS 4 HOURS CHILLING

SERVES 8

If you grow mint, you'll have a bumper crop before you know it. This pie's decadent dark chocolate custard filling is infused with lots of the herb for an intense fresh flavor that you just can't get from an extract.

CRUST

1	(9-oz.) pkg. chocolate wafer cookies (such as Nabisco Famous), finely crushed
5	Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
3	Tbsp. granulated sugar

FILLING

2½	cups whole milk
1	cup packed mint sprigs
5	large egg yolks
½	cup granulated sugar
3	Tbsp. cornstarch
⅛	tsp. kosher salt
4	Tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into 1-Tbsp. pieces
1	(4-oz.) semisweet chocolate candy bar (such as Ghirardelli), chopped
1	(1-oz.) unsweetened chocolate baking square, chopped
2	tsp. vanilla extract

ADDITIONAL INGREDIENTS

2	cups heavy whipping cream
⅓	cup powdered sugar
	Chocolate shavings
	Small fresh mint leaves

1. Prepare the Crust: Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together crushed cookies, melted butter, and granulated sugar in a medium bowl. Firmly press mixture into bottom and up sides of a 9-inch pie plate. (You will have about 2 tablespoons left over. Discard or reserve for another use.) Bake until just set, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven; cool completely on a wire rack, about 20 minutes.

2. Prepare the Filling: Heat milk in a medium saucepan over medium-high until it just comes to a simmer. Stir in mint sprigs, and remove from heat. Cover and let steep 15 minutes. Remove and discard mint.

3. Stir together egg yolks, granulated sugar, cornstarch, and salt in a medium bowl until combined. Very slowly and gradually whisk half of the steeped milk into egg mixture. Whisk egg mixture into remaining steeped milk in saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium, stirring constantly. Continue simmering, stirring constantly, until thickened and bubbly, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low; stir in butter 1 tablespoon at a time until incorporated. Add chocolate bar, chocolate square, and vanilla, stirring until chocolate mixture is melted. Remove from heat.

4. Spoon Filling into cooled Crust; cool on wire rack 10 minutes. Place a piece of plastic wrap directly over surface of Filling. Refrigerate until firm, about 4 hours.

5. Beat whipping cream and powdered sugar with an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment on high speed until stiff peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove plastic wrap from pie. Spread top with whipped cream. Garnish with chocolate shavings and small mint leaves.

Chocolate-Zucchini Cake

ACTIVE 35 MIN. - TOTAL 3 HOURS, 20 MIN.

SERVES 12

This impressive yet easy-to-make cake got rave reviews in our Test Kitchen. It's packed with plenty of green stuff (two medium zucchini), but you'll be too distracted by the chocolate flavor and the nutty brown butter frosting to notice. For optimal texture, shred the zucchini on the large holes of a box grater.

CHOCOLATE-ZUCCHINI CAKE

2	cups granulated sugar
½	cup unsalted butter, softened
½	cup canola oil
1	tsp. vanilla extract
2	large eggs, at room temperature
2½	cups all-purpose flour
¼	cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1	tsp. baking powder
½	tsp. baking soda
½	tsp. kosher salt
½	cup sour cream
2½	cups grated zucchini (from 2 medium [6 oz. each] zucchini)
1	cup semisweet chocolate chips

BROWN BUTTER-PISTACHIO FROSTING

½	cup unsalted butter
1	(8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, at room temperature
4	cups unsifted powdered sugar
1	tsp. vanilla extract
¼	tsp. kosher salt
8	Tbsp. roasted salted pistachios, finely chopped, divided

1. Prepare the cake: Preheat oven to 325°F. Coat a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with baking spray. Beat sugar, butter, oil, and vanilla with an electric mixer on high speed until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, and beat until incorporated, about 15 seconds.

2. Stir together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a bowl. Add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with sour cream, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating well on low speed after each addition. Stir in zucchini and chocolate chips. Pour into prepared pan; smooth top with a spatula.

3. Bake in preheated oven until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes. Remove from oven; cool completely in pan, about 1 hour.

4. Prepare the frosting: Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium-high. Cook, stirring occasionally, until butter begins to brown, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat; pour into a heatproof glass bowl. Chill 1 hour.

5. Transfer solidified brown butter to bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat on medium-high speed until creamy, about 30 seconds. Add cream cheese; beat on high speed until smooth, about 20 seconds. Reduce speed to low; gradually beat in powdered sugar, vanilla, and salt. Increase speed to high, and beat until fluffy, 2 minutes. Stir in 5 tablespoons of the pistachios.

6. Spread frosting over cake. Sprinkle with remaining 3 tablespoons pistachios.

Atlantic Beach Pie

ACTIVE 15 MIN. - TOTAL 1 HOUR, PLUS 1 HOUR, 10 MIN. COOLING AND 2 HOURS CHILLING

SERVES 8

Our Test Kitchen's version of Bill Smith's beloved recipe

1½	cups finely crushed saltine crackers (from 1 sleeve, about 37 crackers)
6	Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
3	Tbsp. granulated sugar
1	large egg white, lightly beaten
1	(14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
4	large egg yolks
¼	cup fresh lime juice (from 2 large limes)
¼	cup fresh lemon juice (from 2 lemons)
1½	cups heavy whipping cream
¼	cup powdered sugar
	Lemon and lime zests, for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together crushed crackers, melted butter, sugar, and egg white in a medium bowl until combined. Transfer mixture to a 9-inch glass pie plate; firmly press on bottom and sides. Freeze 10 minutes.

2. Bake in preheated oven until crust is lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; cool slightly, about 10 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, whisk together condensed milk and egg yolks until smooth. Whisk in lime juice and lemon juice until well combined. Pour lime mixture into warm crust.

4. Bake at 350°F until center is just set, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; cool 1 hour. Refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours.

5. Beat cream and powdered sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Spread whipped cream topping over chilled pie, leaving about a ½-inch border of custard showing around crust. Garnish with lemon and lime zests, if desired. Pie can be stored, covered, without whipped cream topping, in the refrigerator up to 4 days. Spread with topping just before serving.

STRAWBERRY TART

Strawberry Tart

ACTIVE 52 MIN. - TOTAL 2 HOURS, 52 MIN.

SERVES 6 TO 8

4	**oz. cream cheese, softened**
½	**cup butter, softened**
1	**Tbsp. sugar**
¼	**tsp. salt**
1¼	**cups all-purpose flour**
	Parchment paper
½	**cup sugar**
¼	**cup cornstarch**
2	**cups half-and-half**
4	**egg yolks**
3	**Tbsp. butter**
½	**tsp. vanilla bean paste***
1	**qt. fresh strawberries, sliced**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Beat first 4 ingredients at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Add flour, and beat at low speed until a dough forms. Shape into a disk; cover and chill 30 minutes.

2. Place dough on a lightly floured surface; sprinkle lightly with flour. Roll dough between 2 sheets of plastic wrap to ⅛-inch thickness. Starting at 1 edge of dough, wrap dough around a rolling pin, separating dough from bottom sheet of plastic wrap as you roll. Discard bottom sheet of plastic wrap. Place rolling pin over a 9-inch tart pan, and unroll dough over pan. Remove top sheet of plastic wrap. Press dough onto bottom and up sides of a 9-inch tart pan. Gently roll or press rolling pin against edges of tart pan to remove excess dough. Line dough with parchment paper, and fill with some pie weights or dried beans.

3. Bake at 400°F for 17 minutes. Remove weights and parchment paper, and bake 5 more minutes or until lightly browned.

4. Combine ½ cup sugar and ¼ cup cornstarch in a heavy saucepan. Whisk together half-and-half and egg yolks. Gradually whisk half-and-half mixture into sugar mixture in saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil, and cook, whisking constantly, 1 minute. Remove from heat.

5. Stir in 3 tablespoons butter and ½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste. Place plastic wrap directly on filling in saucepan (to prevent a film from forming). Let stand 30 minutes or until set.

6. Spoon into prepared shell. Cover and chill 1 hour or until completely cool. Top with fresh strawberry slices.

*½ tsp. vanilla extract may be substituted.

RECIPE INDEX

BARS & BROWNIES

79 Brown Butter-Caramel Blondies
79 Cappuccino Swirl Bars
80 Lemon-Coconut Chess Bars
80 Peanut Butter-Fudge Bars
80 Raspberry-Almond Crumble Bars
50 Raspberry-Rhubarb Bars
80 Spiced Pecan Pie Bars
79 Ultimate Dark Chocolate Brownies

BUNDT CAKES & POUND CAKES

61 7UP Bundt Cake
29 Chocolate Bundt Cake
90 McLeod Farms' Fresh Peach Pound Cake

CUPCAKES & MINI CAKES

53 Carrot-Pineapple Mini Bundt Cakes with Buttermilk-Vanilla Glaze
63 Cheerwine Cherry Cupcakes with Cherry-Swirl Frosting
51 Coconut Cupcakes with Birds' Nests
28 Mini Confetti Cakes
28 Rose Petal Cupcakes

FROSTINGS, CRUSTS & TOPPINGS

7 Best-Ever Whipped Cream
90 Brown Butter-Vanilla Wafer Crust
63 Cherry-Swirl Frosting
63 Fudgy Cola Frosting
61 Lemon-Lime Cream Cheese Frosting
29 Lemon-Vanilla Buttercream
53 Pineapple Flowers
29 Rose-Vanilla Buttercream
61 Sugared Lemon-Lime Zest
29 Sweetened Whipped Cream
90 Vanilla Bean Whipped Cream
29 Vanilla Buttercream

FROZEN DESSERTS

87 Avocado-Key Lime Pie Ice Cream
87 Blueberry-Cheesecake Ice Cream
86 Blueberry-Cheesecake Ice-Cream Pie
87 Buttermilk Ice Cream
84 Cherries-and-Cream Icebox Cake
84 Chocolate-Peanut Butter Icebox Pie
84 Creamy Peach Icebox Cake
86 Key Lime Ice-Cream Pie
87 Strawberry-Pretzel Ice Cream
86 Strawberry-Pretzel Ice-Cream Pie

LAYER CAKES

38 Apple Stack Cake
38 Blackberry Jam Cake
70 Blueberry-Lemon Layer Cake
63 Coca-Cola Layer Cake with Fudgy Cola Frosting
15 Confetti Cake with Vanilla-Sour Cream Frosting
16 Devil's Food Cake with Salted Peanut Butter Frosting and Ganache
39 Lemon-and-Chocolate Doberge Cake
15 Lemon Cake with Lemon-Thyme Frosting
28 "Naked" Lemon Cake with a Flower Crown
17 Red Velvet Cake with White Chocolate-Cream Cheese Frosting
28 Vanilla Layer Cake with a Flower Cuff
16 White Cake with Berry-Swiss Meringue Buttercream Frosting
17 Yellow Cake with Malted Chocolate Buttercream

PIES & TARTS

94 Atlantic Beach Pie
90 Banana Pudding Pie
20 Big Mama's Egg Pie
66 Blueberry Chiffon Mini Pies
70 Blueberry-Lavender Hand Pies
94 Fresh Mint Chocolate Pie
4 Pecan Crunch Tart
49 Strawberry Chiffon Mini Pies
95 Strawberry Tart

SHEET CAKES

69 Blueberry-Ginger Crumb Cake
69 Blueberry-Honey Upside-Down Cake
46 Carrot-Walnut Snack Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting
94 Chocolate-Zucchini Cake
62 Dr Pepper Texas Sheet Cake
47 Hummingbird Snack Cake with Brown Butter Frosting
62 Nehi Orange Poke Cake
46 Raspberry Snack Cake with Salted Milk Chocolate Frosting
47 Strawberry-Rosé Snack Cake
46 Triple-Coconut Poke Snack Cake

LEMON-COCONUT CHESS BARS

Recipe, page 80

Southern Living® Cakes & Pies (ISSN 0038-4305), 2023. *Southern Living Cakes & Pies* is published annually in April by Meredith Operations Corp., 1716 Locust St., Des Moines, IA 50309-3023.

© Meredith Operations Corp. 2023. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

Better Homes & Gardens
BHG
100

LOVE MAGAZINES?
SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

allrecipes
COUNTRY FRENCH
Bread
MODERN farmhouse style
Halloween
houseplants

WE'RE LOOKING FOR ENTHUSIASTIC READERS TO GIVE THEIR OPINIONS ON OUR FOOD, COOKING, DECORATING, REMODELING, GARDENING, AND HOLIDAY ISSUES.

Join our Magazine Advisers Community to get exclusive previews of our issues and tell us how we can make them even better. It takes only a few minutes, and as a special thank-you, you can enter to win $10,000.* Plus, as you participate in future surveys, you'll be eligible for other sweepstakes prizes.

TRADITIONAL HOME
FORKS OVER KNIVES
COASTAL LIVING
do it YOURSELF
KETO QUICK & EASY RECIPES
allrecipes FOOD TRUCK FAVORITES
Southern Living Porch Style

CookingLight carb-smart
smoothies

MAGAZINE ADVISERS Community

PLUS ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN **$10,000***

GET STARTED TODAY AT
MAGAZINE-ADVISERS.COM
OR OPEN YOUR CAMERA APP AND POINT HERE

NO PURCHASE OR SURVEY PARTICIPATION IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. Subject to Official Rules at Meredith.com/ReaderSweepstakesRules. The $10,000 Reader Survey Sweepstakes begins at 12:00 am ET on October 1, 2022, and ends at 11:59 PM ET on September 30, 2023. Open to legal residents of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia, 21 years or older. Sweepstakes is offered by Dotdash Media Inc. and may be promoted by any of its publications in various creative executions online and in print at any time during the sweepstakes. Limit one (1) entry per person and per email address, per survey. Void where prohibited. Sponsor: Dotdash Media Inc.

ADVERTISEMENT

Southern Living
Southern Living
Southern Living
HOMEGROWN
COTTON
PROUDLY GROWN IN THE USA

THE
Southern Living®
COLLECTION
exclusively at
Dillard's

See the full collection of bedding, bath and more at
DILLARDS.COM/SOUTHERNLIVING

SOUTHERN LIVING IS A TRADEMARK OF TI LIFESTYLE GROUP, LLC, A SUBSIDIARY OF MEREDITH OPERATIONS CORPORATION AND IS USED UNDER LICENSE.